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EASTERN LANDS,

AND

EASTERN PEOPLE;

OR,

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF NIGHTS IN THE EAST.

88615

BY THE

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AUTHOR OF "ANTAR," "PROTESTANT MEMORIALS," ETC

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EASTERN LANDS AND PEOPLE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY NOTICES OF PLACES, PEOPLE, AND CUSTOMS.

Away for awhile from English hearths and English homes! Come with me in imagination, kind reader, to my various Oriental dormitories, and I think you will acknowledge that there are spots to slumber in which may compete even with that comfortable place—a feather bed in old England. *Comfortable!* the French have no word of their own to express the meaning of the English adjective, and so are compelled to borrow

ours. *Home!* for it they have no equivalent. How comes it then that the Anglo-Saxon, whose very language bespeaks him a lover of a comfortable home, is the most vagrant of beings? Perhaps because he makes himself at home everywhere. I remember finding an Englishman and his wife quite at home in the Sinaitic Desert, on the eastern side of the Red Sea; they had found a spring, built a house, fetched earth, from a distance (for all around was barren sand), and on the soil thus procured planted a cabbage garden. When I visited them a copy of the *Illustrated London News* was lying on a table in the home they had prepared for themselves in the wilderness, and their children were running about in excellent health, fed on Arab fare, speaking very broken English, but fluent Arabic. Well, let us be vagrant, and yet at home—away! let us find out a place to sleep in—the old adage says,

"After dinner sit awhile,
After supper walk a mile."

So come along—angels are said to travel by volition, let us for awhile take their privilege. England, France, the Bay of Biscay (we will not stop to be sea-sick) are left behind; we pass beneath the frowning rocks of Gibraltar, where Brittannia securely holds the key of the Mediterranean; on past the noble mountains of Grenada, the wild hills of Calabria, and threading our watery way among the Volcanic Islands circling Stromboli's burning cone, we reach Sicily, with her olive-clad slopes and fairy villas, now I trust to be free, but reminding one when I visited it, on account of the mingled tyranny and superstition which trampled, as with Satan's hoof, the flowers of Paradise, of Byron's lines respecting Greece,

"It seems as though the fiends prevailed
Against the seraphs they assailed,
And fixed on heavenly thrones could dwell
The freed inheritors of hell."

We catch a glimpse of Crete on the left, the Isle of heathen Ariadne and the Christian pastor, Timothy. On, on, on—and now before us is the low brown outline of Egypt, a few sand-hills covered with wind-mills on the right, Mahommed Ali's palace on the left, and Pompey's Pillar between, alone breaking the monotonous level. We anchor about a quarter of a mile from shore, for the entrance to the harbour is dangerous—a native pilot is secured—we land at Alexandria—we battle with the donkey boys—we ascend the canal to Atfeh (for when I was there the railway between Alexandria and Cairo was not completed)—we steam on to Cairo—we ride through the streets on donkeys, the Egyptian locomotives, an Arab servant, stick in hand, running before us to clear the way through the narrow streets, sometimes so narrow that only one donkey can pass at a time; on each side the walls and doors are covered with arabesque carving,

above are casements of carved wood, and balconies projecting across the street so as often to meet and sometimes to cross each other, agreeably shading us from the heat of the sun, and occasionally we catch a glimpse of a muffled female figure. There is a coffee shop, where a number of Turks, squatted on divans, are smoking their cocoa-nut water pipes, or drinking coffee from minute china cups; there you see piled up heaps of cucumbers, and deliciously cool-looking melons, which remind you of the Israelites' longings in the desert: that man with matted hair, and covered with a few dirty rags, and who has just given a cup of cold water to an Arab, from a skin slung at his back, is a Mohammedan saint, so called because he lives on what is given him, and devotes his life to fetching water from the Nile and distributing it gratis, and he is now calling out, almost in the words of Isaiah, "Oh ye thirsty

come and drink, without money and without price." Before us the road is a little wider, but it is so thronged with men and women, of every hue and dress, some on foot and some riding, with donkeys laden with sugar canes or stones, with a camel's solemn head towering here and there, and such a Babel of screaming angry voices arises, you almost think of stopping; but our donkeys have no idea of any such thing, before we can think we are in the midst, the Arab footman before rushes furiously into the mêlée, loudly vociferating, "O, ah! look out Dáhrak, your back!" and so we struggle on, occasionally perhaps we run over a dog or a child, but no matter, they seem used to this sort of thing—the dog scarcely takes the trouble to growl, and the little india-rubber boy, whom you fear you have hurt, pops up his laughing face and calls out "Baksheesh! Baksheesh!"—but now we are out in the

Usbekéeh, once a lake, but drained by Mahommed Ali, and now a large public garden, well planted, and having broad walks; around are the European hotels, and several palaces belonging to members of the Pacha's family; but we must stop neither at "the Indian Family Hotel," nor "Shepherd's," round which groups of English travellers are lounging, and being done exceedingly brown both by the sun and their dragomans. We proceed to old Cairo, and, having hired a boat, we cross the Nile; the view is pretty —there is the Island of Roda (where Moses is said to have been found), with its elegant palace at one end jutting out into the water; behind us is Cairo, the minarets of the magnificent citadel glittering in the sun—but a shock that makes our crazy vessel shake in all its ricketty timbers reminds us we have reached the other side: remounting our donkeys we pass through the rambling

village of Geezeh, along a road shadowed by trees to the "village of the well of Mecca," with its large grove of palm trees; and now the pyramids are before us—but haste! haste! for the sun is sinking, and there is scarce any twilight in these regions—on! through fields of clover, groves of palm, sycamore, and thorn trees. Hark! the larks are singing as merrily as in England, "the hot village" is left behind, we come to the edge of the desert — vegetation is left behind—we gallop over the sand, pass some tombs cut in a rock, halt by the solemn Sphynx, who by the way has a very damaged nose,—look up! you are at the foot of the pyramids, whose points are glowing with the setting sun, and there is our bed for the night—the summit of the Great Pyramid! Let us go upstairs.

CHAPTER II.

A NIGHT ON THE SUMMIT OF THE GREAT PYRAMID.

When a boy, I read in a number of the *Saturday Magazine* an account of some travellers spending a night on the Pyramid of Cheops. I have long since lost the number, but I can see still in my mind's eye the cut that enchanted me—the travellers and their Arab attendants crouching by the blocks of stone on the top of the vast pile, as the shadows of evening gather over them, talking now of times long gone by, and now of the taran-

tulas that crawl around, the Arabs giving the rather doubtful consolation that tarantulas bite in a house but not on a pyramid. From the time I saw that print I determined, if ever opportunity should occur, that the same spot should be my resting-place for a night, and on January 20, 1853, my wish was gratified. I had been for ten days in the neighbourhood of the pyramids, in a tent pitched behind the Sphynx; I had been inside and outside the Great Pyramid; seen the sun rise from its brow; visited the curious tombs in the neighbourhood; had many a pleasant ride in the Libyan Desert; had rather an interesting interview with a leopard; had collected mummies of monkeys and ibises in their curious earthen jars from the mummy pits; explored the tombs of Apis, and the Pyramids of Sakhára; slept a night with a donkey saddle for a pillow, amid the fleas of a neighbouring village, and now for a night on the top of Cheops' big tomb!

I said "*Let us go upstairs!*"—and this may be taken literally—for it is up a flight of stone stairs, some very high and awkward, and some very narrow, that you have to ascend. Looking at the pyramid from a little distance, say three or four hundred yards, a person who was not aware that it had been ascended would say, "Go up that! you might as well ask me to run up the side of a wall of the same height;" for the steps formed by the placing of the stones are even at that distance almost imperceptible, so that the sides seem slanting lines, but when you draw near, the steps, or ledges of stone, are seen. By taking off my shoes, and keeping on a pair of thick woollen stockings, I was able to go up and down easily without any assistance from the Arabs. The only difficulty in ascending is on account of the height of the steps you have to take, some stones being breast high; and in descending the

long look down may make some giddy, and a slip or false step would in all probability be fatal, as a person losing his footing would bound from point to point like a stone down a steep hill. Just before sunset, after establishing my donkeys for the night in a tomb cut in a rock at the back of the Sphynx, and leaving some Arabs to guard them, I ascended; Suliman, a Copt, educated at Mr. Lieder's excellent school at Cairo, bringing up some blankets, and leaving coffee, charcoal, etc., at the foot of the pyramid, under the charge of a Shekh, for which, when I reached the summit, Suliman again descended. The sun set very much like a huge red cannon ball dropping over the edge of the horizon, no golden clouds to bear his splendid train towards the west, no twilight slowly to close the portals of the day. A few minutes and all was dark—it seemed as if the Deity had reversed the words of creation, and

said, "Let there be no light, and there was none."

I waited and waited, but no signs of Suliman's return.

I had been standing on the top in total darkness for near an hour, and began to fear that I should be left all night to contemplate, in solitary gloom, for I could not see two yards before me, the chilly air, and the cries of the jackals in the desert below. So having lighted a pipe, for though I had no candle I had lucifers, I perched myself on a stone and sat like Patience, not on the top of a monument, but of a pyramid.

I had just got into a meditation upon Mark Tapley, and was wondering whether he would have felt "jolly" under the circumstances, when the sound of a pattering in the darkness made me cock my gun and listen over the side, not quite certain whether a hyena, there are many in the neighbourhood, might not have

thought it his duty to ascend and bear me company; right glad was I to see Suliman clambering up the steep, lantern in hand, followed closely by two Arabs; I fired off my gun as a salute, and soon learned the cause of the delay; the Shekh left to watch the baggage ran away as soon as the sun set, being afraid of Efreets (of whom more anon), however, neither beings spiritual nor bodily interfered with our property, but Suliman did not like to return, till he had persuaded two Arabs of the great advantage of spending a night at the top. I was glad to see them accompanying him, and their stories and conversation in the latter part of the night amused me much; but I must confess that my first act, after they joined me, was to eat heartily of bread, cheese, and onions (onions remember are classical on a pyramid, Herodotus being witness), and my next to wrap myself in my blankets and

take a sound nap on the western side of the summit, sheltered from the wind by four large blocks of stone. I remember reading somewhere that a sailor who had ascended Mont Blanc, when asked by a sentimental lady how he felt when he reached the top, and looked forth upon the vast view before him, replied, "Felt, ma'am! felt, ma'am! why *cold, cold decidedly!*" and I fear my conduct was equally unsentimental, but such it was. About midnight I awoke, a stone mattress is not very productive of long slumbers, and found Sulimah and the Arabs had kindled, close to me a little charcoal fire, over which they were cowering, their teeth chattering terribly with the cold; they told me they expected a hurricane from the appearance of the night, that it was impossible to descend, and that in case the storm came, all to be done was to lie down and cling to the blocks of stone. I never knew nor could have im-

agined there existed such darkness; it *was* a darkness that might be felt, and seemed to gather like some tangible mantle closer and closer around us; the charcoal fire, though well fed, lost even its dull light, and we had to bend close over it to assure ourselves that it was not gone out: I thought of the beautiful passage in the Book of Wisdom which describes the plague of darkness in Moses' day, but still more of that passage in the Book of Inspiration which speaks of the darkness which might be felt, and which I never fully realised before, till I felt an indescribable *something*, not like anything aeriform or negative, but rather a congregation of black atoms gathering around me. We waited I know not how long; the Arabs seemed tongue-tied, and all I could get from Suliman was that it was a great pity we were not at the foot of the pyramid instead of the top. The wind blew stronger and stronger, and at

last, with one brush of its wing of darkness, swept the charcoal fire down the side; we gathered the rest of our "impedimenta" around us, and expected every moment the storm in full fury—on a sudden the wind ceased, and at the same moment, as though a curtain had been drawn rapidly aside, the clouds parted, and the moon in all her glory shone forth instantaneously upon us! the effect was striking, and we started instinctively to our feet, it was almost as light as day; before us was the second pyramid, and below, the tombs, where we could distinctly see the jackals wandering; in the distance were the pyramids of Sakkára; we were no longer isolated, the light of the moon and stars had made us one with the world above and the world below; we relighted the candle in the lantern, long since blown out by the gusts of wind, kindled a fresh fire of charcoal, and made some coffee, in

a coffee-pot, the lid of which had migrated some time before down the side of the pyramid in company with the charcoal fire. I never could impress upon Suliman that any serious quantity of water was necessary to be carried about for the making of coffee, so we had it about the consistency of thin (and not very thin) mustard, and as we had plenty of sugar, the combination was pleasingly suggestive of the treacle of childhood. We got more lively, I fired my gun and pistols several times and woke echoes from the neighbouring pyramids, but the firing seemed to have no further effect upon the jackals below than to make them cock their ears and prick up their noses, as much as to say, "What brings you up there? you ought to be taken up for disorderly conduct." A jackal, when his attention is arrested, and he is not frightened, has a peculiarly knowing look, combined with seeming indifference,

much like that of a schoolmaster, pretending diligently to mend a pen, and yet keeping a sharp look out for any he thinks may be making games at him.

When I had had sufficient coffee porridge, I took the lantern and carefully inspected the stones which compose the summit; they are covered with inscriptions, and, alas for human fame! some names have been erased to make room for others: there were the usual number of Smiths and Browns, but among the names recorded, I found one of an old friend, and one of a school-fellow,—when I saw these latter, I said to myself, never tell me that it is a folly in an Englishman to cut, as he is wont, his name everywhere. Is it not a pleasure, in the grove that was the haunt of childhood, to find one's name still living in the bark of a tree? and is it not a pleasure in some distant region to find written upon some rock a friend's name, as though he had left a card for us

and all friends that should follow in his wake? — If it is vulgar, well — then I confess myself in this respect a snob.

Reseating myself by the fire, the Arabs told me that the pyramids were haunted with three efreets, "and perhaps," they laughingly added, "you to-night may make a fourth! I had always gathered from the Arabian Nights, Vathek, and other sources, that efreets were demons, but these Arabs informed me, that when any one died a violent death, his spirit haunted the place as an efreet: in fact, the efreets were ghosts, of whom the Arabs seemed in much dread, which Suliman appeared to share, for when I said— "I wish one would come and smoke a pipe with us," he was quite shocked, and assured me he had seen one himself; it came out, however, upon cross examination, that before seeing it he had imbibed a considerable quantity of arrack. The three efreets supposed to haunt the pyr-

amids were as follows: one of an Englishman, who having drunk rather more than he could carry, rolled over when he neared the top, and was dashed to pieces; the other two were Arabian efreets. Some years ago a lady, accompanied by her husband and another gentleman, ascended the Great Pyramid, they were attended by several Arabs: half way up there is a halting place, and the lady, being fatigued, wished to rest longer than the Arabs thought necessary, so they urged her to proceed, one of the gentlemen (not the lady's husband) foolishly forgetting on what dangerous ground they were, knocked down one of the Arabs; this Arab tumbled over the side, and striking against another, who was coming up, both rolled to the bottom and were dashed to pieces: the gentleman, seeing what had been the result of his blow, descended as quickly as he could; he found a number of Arabs collected around

the bodies, wailing over them, he pretended not to know how the thing had happened, mounted his horse and galloped off; it was well for him he did so, for the Arabs, learning the true state of the case, pursued him, determined to have blood for blood—however, he reached and crossed the Nile in safety; the matter was represented to the Pasha, who said he would not punish the Englishman, but requested him to leave the country, as he could not guarantee his safety from "the avenger of blood." The Arabs, who had pursued the rash man to the very brink of the Nile, returned to "bury their dead," but, with commendable forbearance, did no harm to the lady and her husband, because they were not in fault. Time would fail if I were to tell you of sociable efreets, who consort with the watchers at the gates of Cairo; of one that loved a fair Cairene, for with such tales the Arabs beguiled the time till the charcoal was

exhausted, and the candle in the lantern burnt low; I then returned to my blanket and slept soundly till after sunrise, when I was struck with the remarkable contrast as you look towards Cairo, between the desert and the fertile valley of the Nile, which was green and fresh from the inundation; it appears as though you should take a brush with brown paint and draw one slip, and close to it, with a brush dipped in green paint, draw another, so distinct is the line of demarcation between the desert and the watered valley. As I stand with my face towards Cairo, and my back to the Lybian Desert, I have on my right hand the Pyramids of Sakkára, between them and the pyramid on which I stand, once stood the proud city of Memphis, now desolate, according to the word of God, "Heaven and Earth may pass away but God's word endureth for ever." We rapidly descend, for we have a long journey before us, and are

soon at the bottom. Good morning, kind reader! we shall meet, if all is well, for another night, in the Desert of Sinai, on the shore of the Red Sea.

CHAPTER III.

A SAND-WAY TO A SAND-BED.

We parted at the foot of the Great Pyramid, let us now pass a night together in the Desert of Arabia. Farewell to Egypt! Shall we apostrophize the Nile before we depart? who shrouds his head in mystery, and has, or had (for five are choked with sand) seven mouths—by the way, it is a peculiarity of rivers, never to have their mouths at their head, or source, but always at their tail, or tails, which they wag in the briny ocean.

Shall we apostrophize the Nile? I think not; enough bombast has been written about the poor old fellow already.

Away with frivolity! our feet are now to be on "holy ground." I say this pre-eminently of Arabia. True it is that the whole of the East sustains its character of immutability in manner and custom, and many are the places full of Biblical associations, but more than any place the Desert of Sinai, unchanged by

time, and unmarred by man, calls us back with silent eloquence to the days of old. Egypt was indeed the birthplace of Moses, the scene of Israel's toil and deliverance, and the hiding place of the infant Saviour, but amid pyramids, temples, mosques, minarets and bazaars, these things are well nigh forgotten. If we go to Jerusalem, on the site of Israel's temple towers the mosque of Mohammed, and amid the tawdry tinsel trappings of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the superstitious mummeries of the monks, it is difficult to compel the mind to realize the fact that we are standing on the awful rocks where the world's Redeemer gave up the ghost! But not so with the desert, of it may be said what the poet said of the ocean—

"Time writes no wrinkle on thy changeless brow,
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now."

There, in all their ancient freedom, roam the descendants of the wild man, Ishmael;

their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them. As your footsteps echo through the mountain passes, you feel that the everlasting hills have undergone but little change since they resounded with the tramping of Israel's host. Israel's forty years' dwelling-place has indeed changed its inhabitants, but its sandy pavement, its caverned chambers, its rocky walls, its starry roof of azure, are the same. It seems an image of its Creator, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

When full of bible-wrought memories, one traverses the desert, it seems like revisiting, in mature age, the haunts of childhood; in one case,

"The moss-covered bucket that hangs in the well,"

takes the care-worn man back to the days when, wearied with childish pastime, he drank from the brim of the liquid crystal. In the other, the waves of the Red Sea, still seeming to sound the requiem

of Pharoah's host; the bitter well of Marah; the palm trees of Elim; the rocks that melted at the presence of God—these the traveller expects to meet him, and they do meet him! They are the unchanged diagrams of nature, illustrating the wanderings of the children of Israel. He would scarce start to see, on rounding some rock, the multitude of emancipated slaves, encamped in a sandy valley, with the tabernacle in the midst; in fact, he rather misses them, as familiar faces that have vanished from "the old house at home."

But we must proceed, kind reader, or else perhaps you will think the desert a dry subject (I didn't intend a pun), and get sleepy before you get to your sleeping-place. We will suppose our arrangements made, easier however supposed than done. I remember spending the whole of one morning in bargaining for a prayer-carpet; after bantering for nearly

three hours, the merchant from time to time sinking the amount of his demand, and I raising my offer, I thought, from the calm manner in which he discharged the smoke from his mouth (we had smoked several pipes over the matter), that his mind was made up to accede to my last offer. He muttered something, though understanding enough Arabic for ordinary purposes, I could not catch what he said.

"He is saying," said Suliman, my Coptic attendant, with the utmost gravity, "that there is but one God, and Mohammed is His prophet."

My patience was now exhausted, I jumped from the divan and turned away in a rage, but the merchant called me back, and said, as if it was a great favour, "You are my friend, you shall have the carpet at the price your offer." This is a specimen of bargains at Cairo. Some, when about to travel through the desert,

sell themselves to their dragoman: agree with him to take them for so much through the desert; stop when he choses, go on when he choses, eat what he likes to give them, in fact are babes in the hands of their oriental father. Reader, if you contemplate a journey through the Desert of Sinai, do nothing of the kind; do as I did, make your own bargains and arrangements, and simply take a Copt or Mohammedan as your mouth-piece; learn all the Arabic you can before you start, if it is only the vocabulary in Murray's guide-book, for it is a great check upon your attendants, if they know that you have an inkling to their conversation. When I traversed the desert, I was accompanied by a wife, now departed, whose courage and endurance never failed in the most trying circumstances. Like myself, she had been from childhood possessed with the love of Eastern travel. She has now exchanged the shifting tab-

ernacles of earth for "the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" and over the grave, in the lovely country church-yard of Stanton-on-Arrow, where her body sleeps till the glorious resurrection morn, is the inscription, With me she visited the earthly Jerusalem, but has before me reached the heavenly Sion." There sleeps her body—may her spirit be my guardian angel till I die!

On the 17th of February, 1854, we started from Cairo, and high time it was to do so, as, for the two days previous, a wind similar to the khamseen had been blowing, the air like the breath of a furnace, while the fine particles of hot sand formed a cayenne pepper fog, so dense that you could scarcely see a few yards before you, and had eyes and nose filled at every step.

We passed through the "iron gate of the city," and found waiting for us, about a mile outside Cairo, our Arab attendants,

with their camels laden with our provisions, tent, etc. Here we bade a friend of Mrs. Lieder's, who accompanied us thus far, farewell, and parted from our favourite donkeys, who had carried us so well during our residence in Egypt, and also from our faithful one-eyed donkey-man, who shed tears from his one eye at our departure. Most feeling, aye, and most poetical, in their language are the Arabs of Egypt and the desert. I remember when we said adieu to the gardener and his wife, who attended to the garden attached to the "Kasr" in which we resided at Cairo, it was a bright moonlight night, "We shall soon be far asunder," said the gardener's wife, "but," added she, pointing upwards, "the moon will look down on us all, and I will say to the moon, 'Moon! tell Sitteh (the lady), tell Koagher (the master), I am thinking of them.'"

It was a stirring time, when alone

(barring our servants), we started for our long wilderness journey; we had been repeatedly told of the danger of doing so by the residents in Cairo, and advised to join a large party with an experienced dragoman; but we preferred going our own way—able to stop when and where we liked, and diverge at will from the ordinary route,—so, trusting to God, good temper, and fearlessness to help us, we went forward, and never repented our determination.

Behind, fading away in the distance, was the citadel of Cairo, the pyramids dimly seen, and the fertile valley of the Nile, sprinkled with groves of palm trees.

Our Arabs, five in number—

> "Each with sabre or gun in hand,
> The only law of the desert land,"

gaily singing as they tramped beside us, while we rode our camels, (by the way, I cannot think how travellers can call the

motion of the camel disagreeable, it is indeed peculiar, but I should have thought a few hours' practice would have reconciled any one to the stately roll of the ship of the desert) — thus journeying through the exhilarating atmosphere we thought but little of the perils of the way, but we were from time to time reminded that we had entered upon a waste howling wilderness—we passed skeletons of camels, on one occasion a deserted camel dying from exhaustion, on another a horse in the agonies of death from thirst; it was a piteous sight when, as we came up, the horse rose on his forelegs and turned an imploring look towards us; I wished to give him some of the water we carried in barrels, but the Arabs would not suffer this to be done, as they said we had only enough for our own use, so we were compelled to pass on; the poor creature watched us for some time, and then sank down again upon the sand.

Verily "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now!"

When we caught sight of the tongue of the Red Sea, which, by the bye, looked like a very bright blue sea, there was a vessel, proof of British enterprise, steaming off from Suez; sending our camels round the end of the gulf, we crossed in an open boat at the spot (between Jebel Suez and Ras Atákah) where the Israelites are generally supposed to have passed; and I think the supposition is just, for it is exactly the place where the Israelites would have been *shut in;* mountains on either side—the Egyptians in the rear—the sea in front—and as the descent into the water is gradual, in the darkness of night the Egyptians, unaware of the miraculous interference, when the Israelites began to move, might follow them very far before they perceived that there was "water to right of them, water to left of them."

When we went over, the sea was very rough, and our crazy boat was half full of water; during the passage, the shekh of our Arabs prostrated himself at the bottom of the boat; I thought at first how beautiful to see him when in danger praying! Alas, closer investigation proved that he was only very sea-sick!

Our boat not being able, on account of the shallowness of the water, to approach the shore, we had to be carried for a considerable distance through the surf on the shoulders of Arabs; we strolled along the shore, strewed with shells and coralline, and after a fatiguing walk through the sand, reached an eminence, which commands a splendid view; before lay a spacious plain, extending on all sides, where perhaps Moses sang his song of triumph, and Miriam and her maidens rejoiced with timbrels and dances—beyond was the shore, where the Israelites looked upon the swollen carcasses of

their foes—still farther the Red Sea—on the other side, Jebel Suez, and Jebel Atákah, with their chalky sides.

The Arabs who came with us in the boat now went off to meet their companions and the camels; while we waited for their return, I could not help thinking, from the utter silence and absence of motion, save in the restless waters of the sea, whose murmurs we were too far off to hear, that the whole scene was more like a picture than a reality, everything was there you expected to see — but instead of a picture, which from its vividness you could imagine instinct with life, it was a reality which from its immobility resembled a canvas sketch or panorama. The solemn silence was quite overpowering, not a bird to chirp, not a tree to rustle, not a bee to hum; there was such an entire absence of sound, that when a breath of air turned over a leaf of the book I held in my hand, my wife started, and said, "What is it?"

I had just finished reading the song of Moses and of Miriam, when our camels and attendants came in sight; a momentary breeze sprang up and swept murmuring by; the shekh, as he drew near, pointed with his finger to the sea and said, "Listen, there is the moaning of the spirits of Pharoah and his host over the waters."

But we must proceed, I may not linger over scenes which are photographed on my mind by sunny memory—I do *not* say, "because they have been so often and so well described by others," for however old the track a man travels, if he will honestly write down *his* impressions, and what occurred to *him*, there will be always something new, even if it be but trifling, to fill up the picture that previous word-painters have made; a cornice or pillar will be added to the building—a tree or mountain to the landscape—customs to the country—which were unnoticed or disregarded before; no man sees eye to

eye; what one values another cares not for; therefore as there are diversities of readers, there should also be diversities of writers; the descriptions of the enthusiast and of the sceptic, of the laughing philosopher and of the crying philosopher, of the practical man, and of the visionary, are all useful, and correct one another; for *no one man is a perfect straight line*, and it is well to walk round a place or opinion, and look at it from every point of view. I should like to read "Travels in Egypt, by a Sweep, M.S.," *i.e.* Master of Soot—for if Huntingdon appended to his name S.S. (Sinner Saved), why should not the sweep have his M.S.?

My sooty graduate would be sure to remark a fact I never saw specifically noticed by any other traveller, viz., that there are no chimneys in Egypt, and no soot because there is no coal.

But we must hasten on, not because the ground is too beaten to walk leisurely

over, (especially as I was not content with travelling along the ordinary routes, but wandered to and fro—not merely travelling *through* the desert, but traversing it in all directions,) but because our resting-place for the night is to be on the shore of the Red Sea, not at the spot where the Israelites crossed, but where, having lost sight of the Red Sea for nearly three days, by turning through rocky defiles and wadys (one of which, Wady Gerundel, had the appearance of a tastefully laid out garden,) we came again suddenly to the now broadened waters of that mysterious sea, across which the hills of the Land of Bondage were but faintly visible.

It was a glorious afternoon when we entered Wady Tyebah, by far the most romantic valley I had seen; as we came into it we saw on rock and sand numbers of lizards, beautiful creatures they are (utterly unlike their ugly relatives in England, the land and water newts),

green, golden, and silvery, some merrily chasing each other over the sandhills, others half asleep, sunning themselves on the rocks, and lazily stretching out their little spotted feet with all the luxuriousness of Orientals; occasionally the appearance of a snake with fiery eyes and forked tongue (the snakes prey on the lizards), would cause them to scutter off in dismay.

The shekh, who was generally at our side, always cheerful and always ready to do anything for us that he thought would please or make us comfortable, caught one of the silvery lizards, which he found asleep, and brought it to us in his hand, and then, at our request, let the merry little creature go again to his desert home.

Wady Tyebah is quite a fairy-land; sometimes our path lay at the foot of vast cliffs, steep as a wall; here and there on the sides of the mountains were

growing shrubs of a light bright green; the sharp turns of the rocks opened new and strange scenes every moment: at one time an immense rock standing at the end of our way seemed to bar our progress, but coming up and rounding a corner we issued into a way broad and level as if cut out of the rock by an English engineer; besides lizards, the only living creatures we saw were some grey swallows, and as our voices and footsteps echoed along the rocks, it seemed as if we were intruding upon the solitude of nature, or entering some enchanted valley; so sublime was the scene in its wildness, and yet so beautiful in its minutiæ, that it did not appear a neglected spot, and one almost expected to meet its owner challenging us with the words, "What doest thou here?"

I could not help thinking of the grand lines of Lucan when he speaks of the forest solitude and the awful Divinity—

"Whom in his dread retreat,
The Druid fears at midnight hour to meet."

"Fama ferebat
Sæpe cavas motu terræ mugire cavernas,
Et procumbentes iterum consurgere taxos,
Et non ardentis fulgere incendia silvæ.
Roboraque amplexos circumfluxisse dracones;
Non illum cultu populi propriore frequentant,
Sed cessere Deis: medio cum Phœbus in axe est,
Aut cœlum nox atra tenet, pavet ipse sacerdos
Accessus; *Dominumque timet deprendere luci.*

Ascending a steep path on the right, we looked down upon a sweet oasis, with more than a dozen palm trees in it, and a small clear stream meandering along.

In Wady Tyebah one of our Arabs gathered me a branch of the tree upon which the manna is found.

"The manna is found in shining drops, on the twigs and branches (not upon the leaves) of the Turfa *(Tamarix Gallica mannifera*, of Ehrenberg), from which it exudes in consequence of the puncture of an insect of the coccus kind, *coccus*

manniparus of the same naturalist. It is white, of the size of a very small pea, and what falls upon the sand is said not to be gathered. It has the appearance of gum, is of a sweetish taste, and melts when exposed to the sun or to a fire. In Arabic it is called *men*, and is sold by the druggists of Cairo. This name is similar to the old Hebrew men or min by which it is mentioned in the bible, and was given it in consequence of the uncertainty of the Israelites about this unknown substance, who called it *men* ('what') 'for they wist not *what* it was.'"

I have before me several tin pots containing manna, which I purchased from the monks of Mount Sinai, and I can bear testimony to one fact corroborative of the bible narrative, viz., that when exposed to the action of air and light, the manna speedily breeds worms and stinks.

Wady Tyebah is not only very beautiful, but very long; near the end of it a vast

rock of various colours rose on the left; I brought away some bits of this variegated mountain; the crags on either side the road being very similar, suggested to us the idea that perhaps they were divided by some convulsion of nature. Issuing from this valley we came upon the shore of the sea; to the right was Hamman Pharoun, with the bold head jutting sea-ward. We turned to the left, and passed the tomb of a saint. The whole way was most picturesque, the rocks being of every shape and hue, and many of immense height. In one place two jet black rocks looked like two demons, with long black robes flowing over their shoulders, bending across a red strip of stone, like a stream of blood, over a pale white ghost-like rock, which one might imagine a trembling spirit, cowering before its fiendish pursuers; the face of one black figure near us was very distinct, and had an awful expression.

The rocks now began to approach the sea, the tide was rapidly coming in. The shekh shewed symptoms of great anxiety, and told us we must gallop.

I said the motion of the camel was agreeable; that remark had reference to the walk, or even the gentle amble, of the well-trained camel, but a gallop on a camel's back, "horresco referens!" such a bone-setting (to use a Herefordshire phrase) I never endured.

On we went, plunging along, the water sometimes above the camels' knees, and the waves high tossed by a strong gale from the west, wetting us through with spray. Suddenly there appeared a rock running out into the sea, upon which the billows beat furiously! We halt for a moment—the shekh says we are in great danger, but that, if we can round this rock, all will be well. Every time the waves retreated there was left a narrow strip about a yard and a half between

precipitous rock and sea; I signified to the shekh that if we dashed forward exactly at the moment of the reflux, we might get by—he assented—my wife exclaimed, "We have had a gallop on the camels, I wonder how they swim?" and, just as the sea retreated, we went ahead and rounded the rock in safety, all but my unfortunate Copt interpreter, Suliman; he was riding last, on a camel that carried two immense crates, containing about 200 eggs, and nearly the same number of oranges, some bottles of "Bass," and one or two of vinegar—the recent gallop had probably not contributed to the soundness of the articles—however this may have been, the returning wave caught Suliman and camel, and lifting them fairly on its bosom, sent them far up upon the beach! fortunately the right side of the rock—directly we saw they were unhurt "laughter inextinguishable" arose, in which the Arabs heartily joined; the

crates, having gone to utter smash, had fallen on the top of Suliman, and covered him and the fore-part of the camel with a heterogeneous mixture; what with sand and sea-water in his eyes, vinegar and ale in his nose, and a plentiful daubing of yoke of egg over his face and clothes, diversified here and there with crushed oranges and broken glass, and his shaved crown divested of tarboosh in the fall, he looked the queerest figure I ever saw—"Why do you laugh?" said he, "it is nothing to laugh at." His solemn manner accompanying his strange appearance rendered him still more ludicrous; the more wrath he became, the more we laughed; however, a little arrack set him right, he was a merry fellow at heart, and in the course of the evening himself looked upon the adventure as a joke. He, however, had his revenge, for many days, by saying from time to time with a sly look of his dark eyes, "Would you like eggs for breakfast? ah!

I forgot, you cannot have them, they were broken on the shore of the Red Sea;" and when it was very hot, he would say, "English beer very nice when the sun is hot—bottles were broken on the shore of the Red Sea."

We were now come to a semi-circle formed by the rocks retreating with a curve from the sea. We went as far as we could from the shore, about three quarters of a mile, and under the overhanging rocks halted for the night; in ten minutes our tent was up, firmly pegged to keep it from being carried away by the wind, the beds were spread, and the Cairo lantern was swinging from the pole in the centre, shedding its cheerful light on the clean fine sand, where our cloth (minus the table) was soon to be spread in the wilderness.

You will remember, when the angels came to Abraham at Mamre, he took a calf, and *hasted* to dress it, and this

custom of cooking animals immediately after their decease is still practised; it makes them *audi tu Soyer*, tender without hanging. I had bought in the morning from a wandering tribe a sheep, to make a feast for my Arabs at night. The poor creature had trotted after us all day, with the exception of a short ride he had when we came through the surf, and now he was bleating outside; we fed him with pieces of bread, and went into the tent again—in half an hour some fried liver and kidneys appeared—we did not ask to what sheep they belonged—it was no time for sentiment, we were hungry!

But night is fairly set in; my wife has dropped asleep; I see, through a flap of the tent door, blown open by the wind, the Arabs have nearly finished their sheep (they do not often eat meat, but when they do, they make up for lost time), and are now seated by a large fire which they have made of the bushes and

wood they find in the desert, looking anxiously from time to time towards the tent, expecting the coffee and tobacco I give them every evening; I must step out and join them, but must leave the "Arabian Night's Entertainment" to the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

AN ARABIAN NIGHT'S ENTERTAINMENT.

LET us join the Arabs. The wind is still restless, and there is a cold keen air coming off the sea, so I put on my Albanian cloak, with its warm shaggy sides and comfortable hood. As I draw near, the Arabs, courteous and dignified as the patriarchs of old, rise to greet me. I call to Saleh, the cook, who, a little apart from the rest, is deeply cogitating (the wreck of the eggs having considerably reduced his resources) on some mysterious

dish for the morrow's breakfast, and who is watching the curls of smoke rising from his ample pipe as if each particular puff was a member of his culinary council. I call to him to bring a plentiful supply of coffee and tobacco. We squat like convivial tailors round the fire, and, after a few minutes' quiet smoking, while the coffee is boiling, the Arabs sing a song, of which I will give a metrical version :—

Here's success to the coffee-cup,
And the pipe of Jebelee ;
To the roving Arab's houseless life,
And his ringing laugh of glee !

Then round with the coffee-cup,
'Neath the heaven of God's adorning,
For we shan't wake with a sad headache,
As the drunkard does in the morning !

We're many leagues of sand sea
From any city home ;
But what care we ?—for we are free,
Where'er our camels roam.

And if those who wake our sleep should break,
And call to the battle-shock,
To Arab ear no sound so dear
As the click of the good match-lock.

We've trusty brands for our hardy hands,
We've pistols under head,
And it's better die where the bullets fly,
Than groaning on a bed!

If cruel death should snatch our breath,
We bow to the will of fate;
And, without a groan or a single moan,
We'll die, and say God is great!

Then round with the coffee-cup,
'Neath the heaven of God's adorning,
For we shan't wake with a sad headache,
As the drunkard does in the morning!

The coffee, milkless, sugarless, circulates in the little cups, and verily delicious is the dark red coffee that the berry of Mocha freshly roasted yields—to have it in perfection in the desert it should be roasted fresh every day. How exhilarating it is, what an aroma salutes your nostrils—all the brackish and *casky* taste, that annoyed you in your aqueous

draughts during the day has been overpowered by the potent infusion. Some one has said it, that it was worth while to learn Spanish if only for the pleasure of reading Don Quixote in the original, and to drink coffee in perfection might almost *per se* tempt an epicurean to Arabia. Oh, Arabia Felix! happy art thou, if only for thy coffee!

During the day we had passed two rude heaps of stones, twenty-five or thirty feet apart, which mark the resting place of the horse of Aboo-Zenneh, and the scene of his last feat of strength and agility; when we reached the spot each Arab stopped, and threw up the sand to keep the mound over the horse's grave; I followed their example; Suliman, the Copt, at first passed on without doing so, but was playfully dragged back by Saleh to perform his duty. I now heard from the shekh the legend connected with the cairn, and I the more readily tell the

tale as it was told to me, because Stanley, though he mentions the spot and the custom, speaks of the history connected with it as unknown. This however is not to be wondered at, as the Arabs of one district are often but imperfectly acquainted with the legends of another, and customs in the desert, as in the world over, are often observed long after the reason of them has been forgotten.

When I inquired respecting Aboo-Zenneh, the shekh asked if I knew the history of Aboosaid—I said I had heard his name, (having some dim recollection of a narrative in Lane's work on Egypt,) but should like to hear the particulars. Suliman hereupon volunteered to tell the tale, which he said was a favourite one at the coffee shops of Cairo, of which he was a great frequenter; he was a capital hand at telling a story, and I made special mention of his cleverness in this respect in a certificate I gave him before

parting with him at Beyrout. I fear the legend will suffer in my hands, but I will endeavour, so far as my brief notes and memory serve, to give it in his own simple language.

Suliman *loquitur*—

"For six years after her marriage, the future mother of the dark man, Aboosaid, had lamented her barrenness, yet did her husband not reproach her, but loved her and honoured her above his other wives and concubines; and it came to pass at the beginning of the seventh year, she went to draw water at the well, and the women upbraided because she had no child; then prayed she unto Allah, but he seemed not to hear her prayer: six mornings she drew water at the well, and six mornings she prayed; now on the seventh, while she was praying yet more earnestly, lo! in the sky there appeared six white birds like unto the birds of Pharoah, and there flew among them a

huge bird, black as night, and he did tear them with his talons! whereat the woman prayed, and said, 'Oh Allah, give me a man child strong as that bird, even though he be black as he is.' After ten months she brought forth a man child, and lo, he was black as one of the Nubians! and the midwives were astonished. Then did the father of Aboosaid (for he had not yet seen his son) gather together his friends, and they rejoiced with the chief greatly for that a son was born unto him. Now when they had feasted, the chief said, 'Bring forth the child, that my guests may behold him,' but the mother delayed to do so, for she feared, on account of the colour of the boy. So, on the seventh day, while the mother yet lingered and excused herself, the chief commanded that he should be brought. Then were he and his guests astonied. Yet was not the father of Aboosaid wrath, for he knew the virtue of his wife, and

doubted not of her honour, but the guests did laugh, and cried, 'How is this? You are white, and your wife is white, how can your child be black? Have you no Nubian slaves?' Then jealousy from Sheitan came upon him, and he arose from the feast in wrath, and he called for the mother of Aboosaid, and said sternly unto her, 'Tell me, is this, thy son, my child or not, that I may know?' but she answered him not, though her tears fell on the ground, for she was grieved that he should count her as one of the shameless women. At her silence the chief was pale with anger, yet he uttered no curse, nor rent his clothes, but said, 'I will not slay thee, for I have loved thee, but on the morrow thou shalt depart far hence, thou and thy child, for ye are my shame; nevertheless, whatsoever of my divers possessions shall bring forth one of its kind this night, be it sheep or goat, camel or ass, horse or

slave that is born, of that kind thou shalt have a hundred,'—and as he spake the word *slave*, his lips trembled. Then went she forth from his presence, saying nothing, for her heart burned with pride at his words, and she knew that God was merciful.

"All night she wept over her child, if perchance her tears and prayers might wash him white; but morning came, and her babe was black as night still. When the sun arose, lo! of each sort of the chief's living possessions had been born one. Then went forth the mother of Aboosaid, with her child, and a hundred sheep, a hundred goats, a hundred camels, a hundred asses, a hundred horses, and a hundred slaves into the wilderness. The chief bade her no farewell, but sat in his tent, and covered his face.

"When she had wandered many weeks, she came to another chief—whom Allah bless! who received her when he had

heard the story of her prayers and trouble; yet, though he received her with hospitality, was she faithful unto the husband of her youth, albeit he had abandoned her to the desert.

"Now Aboosaid grew, and he was a mighty warrior; among the tents of the chieftain there was none like him, for he was seven feet in height, his arms were as the wild palm trees of the wilderness, and he was stronger than any six of his companions; the vultures knew him when he went to battle, and they followed in his track, to prey on the carcasses of the slain!

"When Aboosaid was twenty years of age there arose war between the chief with whom he dwelt and the father of Aboosaid, but Aboosaid knew not that it was his father, for his mother had not told him, though he questioned her much concerning the secret of his birth; therefore went he forth to the battle, and it

came to pass, when he had slain many men, that he approached his father unwittingly to slay him, and he did lift a mighty sword in his hand to cleave him in twain; but his arm refused to move, for Allah stayed it that he should not smite his father; neither could his father reach him with his spear, for Allah stayed his arm lest he should slay his son.

"This did they seven days; and at the end of the seventh, the father cried to Aboosaid and said, for he knew him not—

"'Thou art the son of an efreet, therefore can we not fight as men.' Then was Aboosaid much grieved, and returned to the camp, and sent for his mother, and told what had happened; whereat she wept, for she guessed the truth, yet spake not of it to her son, but said, 'My son, fight not with that man, for Allah wills it not,' but Aboosaid said unto her, 'Shall men say of me, "Doth Aboosaid fear?"'

"Then did Aboosaid make hot a vast caldron of water, and said, 'Though thou hast given me suck, yet will I cast thee into this caldron, if thou tell me not whose son I am.' But she spake not a word.

"Then cried he fiercely, 'Verily then I am the son of an efreet, as the man did say unto me.

"Upon this, for that she feared shame, though not death, she told him the whole truth.

"On the morrow he went, as wont, to the fight, but contending not with the other warriors, he rode towards his father without lifting his sword. His father raised his spear, but his hand was held as aforetime.

"Then said Aboosaid, 'I am thy son, therefore can I not slay thee, nor thou me,' and he told him the whole story; and his father did feel in his heart that his words were true, and he blessed

Allah, and fell on his son's neck, and said, Where is thy mother?' and Aboosaid said, 'lo, yonder in the tents,' and he said, 'Peace be between our armies,—go, fetch hither thy mother

"So Aboosaid went to fetch her, and he entreated her, but she would not come, saying, 'Shall I return to him that believed me not? Go thou to thy father, and be happy—remember thy mother, and distrust not woman.' So she blessed him, and he departed and went and dwelt with his father, but his mother remained alone in the wilderness unto the day of her death."

Thus ended the story of the birth and early years of Aboosaid. During Suliman's recital of it the Arabs (for Suliman told me the tale in English) had been smoking and chatting in an undertone, and sometimes bursting into laughter at one of Sáleh's jokes; some of which, as they were at Suliman's expense, caused him

to turn round and stop in his story and grunt a reply. Saleh was a great wag, pregnant with proverbs and ludicrous fables, he reminded one, in his conversation, of the emerald isle, and an Irishman would undoubtedly have pronounced him "the broth of a boy."

The shekh, seeing that the story was ended, after making a few inquiries of Suliman as to the exact amount of information he had imparted respecting Aboosaid, said, "I will now tell you about the horse of Aboo-Zenneh." As he was speaking, the youngest of the Arabs, who had been sent to gather wood, to replenish our fire, and who had strolled as far as the shore of the sea, returned with glee, bringing with him a strong but empty deal box, which had been thrown by the waves upon the beach. The box was marked, "Mr. Davidson, Aden." We did not stop to meditate how it came ashore, but speedily knocked

Mr. Davidson's property to pieces, and soon made a brilliant fire with it.

We were now comfortably settled,

" Omnibus apprensisque tubis tabacoque repletis
Conticuere omnes attentique ora tenebant,"

while the shekh, solemn as one who had something unknown to the majority of the company to communicate, commenced as follows :—

" You have heard, Koagher, that Aboosaid was a valiant man, and beloved of Allah, but he that standeth on a lofty place shall be exposed to many storms, and he that is the great man of a tribe shall have many enemies. One of the enemies of Aboosaid was Aboo-Zenneh, a brave man, and crafty in counsel, but not of gigantic strength or stature. Now Aboosaid was wont to travel alone, confiding in his might, and his horse was like Al Borak, the horse of Mohammed, and could journey unwearied for days and nights without water. One day,

when the sun was hot and the way toilsome, Aboo-Zenneh, who was encamped beside the palm trees you saw to-day, in the midst of a hundred tents, close to the only well in the district whose lips were not dry, beheld Aboosaid riding alone, for he was searching for pasturage for his camels and flocks. Then Aboo-Zenneh and his men pursued the chieftain, saying, 'Now shall we slay him, cut off from his companions.' When Aboosaid saw them he halted until they were within hearing, and called to them in derision, "Can ye drink the water of the efreets, and outride the wind of the wilderness, that ye think to overtake Aboosaid and destroy him!' Then he brandished his black-fringed spear and fled, but he fled in stratagem, that he might separate his pursuers one from another, and slay them in detail; so they followed him, enraged at his bitter words. Now the horse of Aboosaid made prodigious leaps, and the

ground was rocky, while the horse of Aboo-Zenneh, though outstripping the rest, not having been trained to leap from ledge to ledge and advance by bounds, could not compete with the horse of Aboosaid. Then the followers of Aboo-Zenneh cried unto him, and said, 'How is it that thy horse, which thou feedest tenderly with beans and barley, and abundance of water, cannot contend with the horse of Aboosaid, that feedeth on bushes, and endureth thirst among the rocks?' Then did Aboo-Zenneh chide and upbraid his horse, for his heart was stung with the reproaches of his companions; and the brave charger, hearing his words, exerted all his strength, and making, with one last effort, the leap you saw to-day, fell dead! The companions of Aboo-Zenneh fled at the sight, and Aboosaid returned and slew his dismounted enemy. But Aboosaid was a noble man, and honoured the brave horse

and his master, and marked the leap and the horse's grave with the heap of stones you saw this morning; and to this day, in remembrance of the steed, every Arab that passes throws sand upon the mound, crying, 'Oh, horse of Aboo-Zenneh, take, eat beans and barley.'"

Thus spake the shekh:—

"The Arab loves the steed that neighed
Where flashing sabres wave,
That ne'er had fear of shaft or spear—
Keep well the charger's grave!

In his last strife his heart-strings broke,
His master's fame to save;
Mark ye the bed where sleeps the dead,
Keep well the charger's grave!"

For some time before the shekh concluded, I noticed that the eyes of the Arabs were fixed upon the moon, which was shining brightly upon us, and now, without appearing to listen to my thanks for his story, the shekh, too, looked upward to the Queen of the Night. When

in a crowded city or thickly populated country, you do not seem to have any peculiar right to the moon; but far out at sea, in the desert, or on some lonesome mountain, what we called in childhood, "the parish lantern" seems to be our own; it is pendent from the sky for us; it is the lamp to lighten *our* path, swung down from the roof of night by the hand of our loving Father. I have ever remarked that the Arabs regard the moon not with superstition or adoration, but with affection. Without any preface, for I felt we were all thinking of the bright orb above us, I asked the shekh what he thought the appearance which we call the mountains of the moon was. He said, "It is the bosom of the moon." He had never heard of that disreputable individual who, for gathering sticks on the Sabbath, was hoisted up to a lunar residence, to expiate his crimes there in solitude, and form for ever by night "a

horrid example" to sublunary juveniles. What his ideas respecting the moon really were, whether he thought she was a living creature, as many of his observations seemed to indicate, or a light, kindled afresh from time to time, I could not make out: to all questions he replied, "Allah gebér—God is great!" It was enough for him that the moon was the lesser light, that ruled the night; he enjoyed her beams, thanked God for them, and he asked no more.

Saleh, who was a Cairo Arab (Mohammedan, of course), now volunteered to tell a tale; a tale different from any which would have been told by a Bedouin, (I use the word in its common acceptation, as synonymous with a wandering Arab of the desert). The tribes that roam over the Sinaitic peninsula, though nominally Mohammedan, are really Deistical. In the southern part, where we now are, they use no prayer, for they say,

"God knows what we want better than we can tell Him;" as to Mohammed, they simply say, "He was a teacher of good things, as was his still greater forerunner, Issa," (*i.e.*, Jesus). Of the various angels, good and bad, the various degrees of heaven and hell, the rites and ceremonies of the Mussulmans of the cities they know nothing. Of efreets and genii they have about the same knowledge and belief as our poor people in the "back settlements of England" have of ghosts and fairies. They have, however, a sort of reverence for the tombs of saints. All their tales are either the accounts we have in the Pentateuch, slightly varied and coloured by their imagination, or exploits of their men of renown, living or dead. Of the revelations of Mohammed they know no more than they have gathered from casual travellers; so that the story of Saleh, the city Arab, was as new to them as the miracles and parables of

our Saviour, which Suliman read to them from time to time, at my request, out of his Arabic Bible, and to which they listened with the deepest attention. I mention this because the English are apt to imagine that the Bedouins are Mohammedans in the strict sense of the word; whereas they are, with the exception of the belief that there is but one God, and that Mousa (Moses), Issa, and Mohammed were great prophets, almost blank sheets of paper. Nowhere, humanly speaking, would a missionary find a fairer field for operation, and, if not anticipated in the work by some one else, I hope, in the course of a few years, to go out myself as a missionary to the simple children of the wilderness. This, however, by the way—we must return to Saleh. I can see now his thin wiry figure, his clear olive complexion, his hawk's eyes and nose, and his horny hand scarred with a wound he received

in wresting from a Turkish soldier at Damascus, a sword aimed at the neck of a former traveller, who was Saleh's master, and gave him such a character for bravery and fidelity as at once decided me upon taking him for my cook. A stanch Mohammedan was Saleh, he, I believe, would have died for his faith; if there happened at any time to be no food or drink which he, as a Mussulman, could partake of, he would never grumble, but go without. He had a thorough contempt for Roman Catholics, he liked the English, German, and *French*, for he would never allow (and perhaps he was in the right of it) that any Frenchman could be a real Roman Catholic.

But hush! for Saleh is commencing the legend of

ISRAFIL, THE ANGEL OF JUDGMENT.

"ISRAFIL is the angel that stands with the trumpet of judgment in his hand. God

made man happy and beautiful. There is a beauty that is enduring, and there is a beauty that is perishable and fragile. The crystal vase is beautiful, but a single blow may shiver it to atoms in a moment — the sea is beautiful, it rolls on unchangeable for ever. As is the beauty of the crystal vase, so was the glory of man; he ate of the forbidden apple of death, and his glory passed away. Then, from among the ranks of the angels, rose Israfil, and coming to the throne of the Eternal, cried, 'Oh, Most Holy, shall I sound the trumpet, that man and his dwelling-place may be destroyed?' Then flew thither the Angel of Mercy, and bending before the throne, said, 'Shall one man sin and shall the work of thine hands be destroyed?' Then said Allah unto Israfil, 'Stay now thine hand!'

But men went on in their wickedness, the plains and the hills were stained with blood, and when the angels flew between

the earth and the heaven the air was laden with the steam of blood, and trembled with curses, and in the all-representing mirror that is above the central throne, into which Allah gazeth day and night with sleepless eye, lo! idols and the temples of idols were reflected. And when Israfil marked the wrathful eyes of the Almighty, he lifted his hand to sound the trumpet of judgment. Now the Angel of Mercy was in the outer court of heaven, weeping over the wickedness of man, but when she beheld Israfil about to blow with the trumpet, she rushed in haste across the heavenly pavement, but ere she could reach the throne of Allah, her foot stumbled and she fell, so Israfil blew with his trumpet, and the magazines of the waters burst open and covered the earth with the waves of destruction. But Allah said unto the Angel of Mercy, "Though the world be destroyed, yet shalt thou guide in safety over the waters

the ark of Noah.' So men perished not utterly, and at the end of days the Angel of Mercy led forth Noah and his family from the ark, and blessed them with gracious words. And after that, the Angel of Mercy departed not from the throne of Allah, but continued beside Israfil, ever ready to intercede that the hand of vengeance might be stayed. Yet scarce was the earth dry from the waters of the deluge when men sinned yet more, and as they increased, rolled like a second deluge of sin over the earth.

"Then said Israfil, for he was eager, as an avenging spirit, 'Oh, Allah, shall I not now sound the trumpet of judgment? shall man rebel against thee for ever?' But the Angel of Mercy said, 'Speak to them, O Most Powerful, with thine own voice, and they will hear.'

"Then spake Allah unto them from the mountain of Sinai, and they trembled for awhile, for they feared His voice and

majestic presence: for though they saw Him not, yet heard they His speech, and beheld His raiment, which glowed as the fire of a furnace, which no man might gaze on. Yet was all forgotten, though from time to time there came among men holy ones, who taught the things which were for their good.

"Then was Israfil wrath and said, 'Have I an office, and shall I not perform it?' But Allah said, 'Hear what the Angel of Mercy hath yet to say.' Then came she, and, bending before the throne, said, 'Spare awhile, O Most Merciful! they have heard the voice of terror, let them hear the voice of love by Issa, that loveth men.

"Then did Issa descend, and, becoming a man, spake unto the inhabitants of the world the words of heaven, but, though He was loving and humble in words, and kind in His deeds, yea, and did heal the sick and raise the dead, for

power such as man hath not was given unto Him, yet did men seek to slay Him and to crucify Him. So Issa returned unto heaven. Then did Israfil cry, 'Oh, Allah, why tarry I longer?' and he lifted the trumpet to his lips. But the Angel of Mercy, as she looked smiling on Issa, said, 'Is not Issa a man? is not Issa found faultless? for His sake spare the world.'

"Then said Allah unto Israfil, 'Sound not until I give thee word, for the time is not yet.' So Israfil stands even now beside the throne, and waits for the word of Allah.

"One day he shall sound his trumpet.

"At the first blast the dead shall arise. At the second all shall stand before the throne of Judgment. At the third the good shall enter the gates of Paradise, and the bad shall be cast down to dwell with the scorpions of hell.

"Tremble, O Mussulmans, for Israfil

standeth with the trumpet of judgment in his hand!"

When Saleh had concluded, and resumed the quiet smoking of his jessamine pipe, Suliman, who for some time past had shown symptoms of somnolency, suggested that the night was far spent, and that we should have to start at daybreak; so, bidding the Arabs good night, I turned to my tent, in which the lantern was giving a farewell flicker. About half an hour afterwards I looked out at the companions I had quitted. The Bedouins were asleep around the still brightly burning fire, closely wrapped up in their blankets; they entirely cover their heads and whole figure, how they contrive to breathe I do not know, so that they looked like a collection of flannel balls. Suliman was asleep, but sitting up tailor fashion, his extinguished pipe still in his mouth. The camels had finished their beans, and seemed to be enjoying a

wakeful repose. Saleh was still smoking and cooking; when he managed to get sleep I cannot divine. I retired to my bed on the sand, and was soon in dream-land, my slumbers being only occasionally disturbed by beetles, about the size of walnuts, crawling over my face and getting into difficulties in my hair. Short was the night—and when the first grey light of morning was stealing in, the shekh awoke us; he had a very effectual way of starting us, however unwilling we might be to leave our resting place. When he found his words unavailing, he pulled up the pegs of the tent, and when you saw the tent threatening to collapse on the top of you, you felt there was no help but to get up, breakfast, and away. Breakfast over in less than ten minutes, tent, provisions, bedding, etc., were on the camels' backs. We passed onwards, the wind sweeping over the sand left no traces of our temporary habitation, and

we felt the full force of Paul, the tent maker's words, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

CHAPTER V

A NIGHT ON CAMEL-BACK IN THE PASS OF HOWY.

We had passed three days in the Wady Mokatteb, or Written Valley, so called from the inscriptions (chiefly in an unknown character, though some comparatively modern ones are in Greek and Latin) which cover the rocks. Here we spent the greater part of our time in copying the inscriptions and the grotesque sketches of men and animals that accompany them, and in procuring specimens; I am not sure, but I believe I am the

only person in England possessing fragments of these written rocks. I should have had many more, but Suliman had no respect whatever for antiquities or sacred relics, (he actually lighted in the Lebanon a fire to fry some eggs with some wood I had brought from the Mount of Olives,) and he was compassionate towards the beasts of burden,—whenever he could get an opportunity some of my old stones dropped off by accident. However I have still two pieces of sandstone from Wady Mokatteb; one containing two letters similar to the Arabic *aleph*, and another with a letter on it like the Hebrew *ayin*.

Here let me remark that the inscriptions are not in a general way cut in the rock, but pegged out as by some pointed iron instrument struck with a hammer. If in the days of Moses iron tent pegs were used by the Israelites, as they are now by the Arabs, their being struck on the head

with a hammer may have easily notched out the existing "puzzles for pundits." As regards the origin of the inscriptions, I must record my deliberate conviction that the old idea that they are the work of the Israelites is the true one. If we believe that the children of Israel did wander in the wilderness—if there exist in that wilderness rocks capable of receiving and retaining writing, may we not reasonably expect to find there some traces of the wandering people of God? Came they not from Egypt, where writing on stone met their eyes at almost every turn, and with but little to do, after hard work in the Land of Bondage, is it not likely the emancipated slaves would divert the *ennui* of the wilderness by cutting their names and conceits on the rocks? True, many of their drawings are ridiculous, but were there no children in the camp of Israel? And does the paterfamilias, who has left his hopeful over a

simple addition sum, feel greatly surprised if on his return he finds on the obverse of the slate a few outlines of indescribable animals, with straight lines for their legs, and no joints in their knees? Tush! depend upon it the young Israelites were as merry, mischievous young monkies as any scholars fresh caught now-a-days for the ragged school.

Can't you fancy some Israelitish mother calling out in the evening, when the tents were being pitched, "Abiram, what's become of the tent pegs? there should be fourteen, and there are only twelve: didn't I give them to you to keep?"

"Yes, mother, but while I went to catch a quail for father's supper, Gershom and Miriam ran off with them, and they are scratching camels on the other side of that big rock."

"Well, go and fetch 'em, and I'll camel 'em when they come back."

Such, in all probability, was the

language of our good old friends of the Pentateuch. The country bumpkin, when he went to London and saw the queen, said, "Lor, mother, the queen has arms the same as anybody else,—I always thought the queen's arms were a lion and a unicorn!" So we get too stilted ideas of the Israelites of old, and forget that they were men, women, and children, of like passions and fancies with ourselves, and that many of them had, no doubt, the John Bull penchant for immortalizing themselves on every stone that was suitable. Beer contends that these inscriptions must be of Christian origin, because in them the cross so commonly occurs, and, strange to say, Stanley quotes his views with approval. But is not the cross (whether crux ansata or crux simplex) a very common emblem in undoubtable Egyptian hieroglyphics? I have now in my possession a stone which I brought from the tombs at Sak-

hára, covered with hieroglyphics, among which is a cross exactly similar to those we sometimes see on puseyite prayer-books. I have also a crux ansata which I brought from a tomb near the foot of the Pyramid of Cheops. Of course, to persons who are well acquainted with Egypt it is needless to mention these well-known things,—I would only warn those who have not had this advantage, of giving any credence to those who scamper through the written valley, and because they see a cross here and there, imagine that all the inscriptions must have been made by Christians. I am almost tired of giving proofs that the cross is not strictly a Christian emblem, but I must give a few notes from Moore's Epicurean. "The cross was among the Egyptians the emblem of a future life. The singular appearance of a cross so frequently recurring among the hieroglyphics of Egypt had excited the curios-

ity of the Christians at a very early period of ecclesiastical history; and as some of the priests who were acquainted with the meaning of the hieroglyphics, became converted to Christianity, the secret transpired. 'The converted heathens,' says Socrates Scholasticus, 'explained the symbol, and declared that it signified "Life to come."'—*Clarke.*

Lipsius, therefore, is mistaken in supposing the cross to have been an emblem peculiar to the Christians. See, on this subject, "L'Histoire des Juifs," liv. vi. c. 16.

It is singular enough that, while the cross was thus held sacred among the Egyptians, not only the custom of marking the forehead with the sign of the cross, but baptism and the consecration of the bread in the Eucharist were imitated in the mysterious ceremonies of Mithra, —Tertull. de Proscriptione Hereticorum.

Zoega is of opinion that the cross, said

to have been for the first time found on the destruction of the Temple of Serapis by the Christians, could not have been the crux ansata, as nothing is more common than this emblem on all the Egyptian monuments.

Stanley says, "They *cannot* have been the work of the Israelites." But what proofs does he bring forward upon which to build so strong a negative? None, save the existence of crosses, which fact we have disposed of, and the remark, "The date of the columns at Malatha, or of the temple and tomb at Petra, would settle the question of the inscriptions written on them, the two latter I presume cannot be older than the Roman dominion of Arabia." Even granting the comparatively modern date of the temple and tomb at Petra, may not the knowledge of the Sinaitic characters have lingered among a few wise men ages after the original writers on the rocks of Sinai had

passed away? There is on the Pyramid of Cheops an inscription in hieroglyphics commemorating the visit of an European sovereign some twenty years ago; will some future savant conclude from this modern antique that all the hieroglyphics in the neighbourhood are of modern date too? While, however, I agree with Forster in thinking that these inscriptions are the work of the children of Israel, I must demur to his interpretation of them. I think no one can read his book without feeling that his renderings and deductions from outlines are fanciful in the extreme. I took Forster's book *lovingly* to Wady Mokatteb, and was quite grieved to feel that he had not yet found the way to wring from those stone tablets the secrets they have kept so well. When at Jerusalem, I asked the chief rabbi if he had heard of these inscriptions. He said he had, and had seen copies of several of them. "They are," said he, "the work of the Samari-

tans." Now this singular statement rather confirms the idea of their Israelitish origin, when we remember that the character which we now call Hebrew is the Chaldean character, and that the true Hebrew character is that which we call the Samaritan. When subsequently shewn, at Nablous, the Samaritan character in the ancient manuscripts there, I was struck with the general resemblance to Sinaitic writing, and Suliman at once exclaimed, "That is just like what we saw in the desert, on the rocks!" If the Israelites were not the authors of these inscriptions; I should be inclined to attribute them to Phœnician miners. Whilst wandering in the neighbourhood of Sarábut el Khâdem, I discovered a huge rocking stone, abounding in these singular writings. But we must go forwards, and you, patient reader, will be kind enough to imagine that these reflections and criticisms have been made as we

have been riding from Wady Mokatteb to Wady Feiran, the Paran of Scripture, that long, winding, watered, verdant valley that, from a distant elevation, looks like a vast green serpent coiled around the foot of black Serbal. Here groves of tamarisk and palm trees and a number of gardens gladden the eye; there are goats, too, rambling at the foot of the hills, whose bleating whispers in the ear sweet hopes of savoury meat. A sight, however, with far less comfortable associations, were some caves in the rocks, once tenanted by hermits, who hoped to gain heaven by making earth a hell. Passing the ruins of the old Christian church, we encamped for the night beside some palm trees, close to a stream of water which issues from a rock hard by, which rock, by the way, seemed to me better to deserve the credit of being the rock struck by Moses than the mass of granite near the convent of Mount Sinai, which the Greek

monks shew to travellers as the veritable relic, probably simply on account of its convenient propinquity to their establishment.

On the morrow, some rain having fallen in the night, and it appearing not unlikely that we should have some more, we determined to proceed that day to the convent. However, as Serbal was not to be left unascended, we sent Saleh on with the caravan, to go by the longest but easiest route, my wife and I remaining behind with two camels, Suliman and two Arabs; intending to journey, later in the day, through the wild and craggy pass of Howy.

The ascent of Serbal, or rather the scramble up it, was very fatiguing. I saw nothing remarkable, save inscriptions in the character before mentioned, and a whole colony of serpents, I should think fifty in number, sunning themselves on the smooth blocks of stone; they darted

off like shots, or, to be more classical, "similes sagittis." And here let me warn travellers against heedlessly thrusting their hands into the shrubs and bushes that are to be found on Serbal and in other parts of the Sinaitic Desert. When not far from the top of the mountain, I caught hold of the hand of a treacherous friend, in the shape of a shrub something like lavender, to pull myself up by, out darted a little snake, evidently much annoyed at being disturbed in his siesta. From the summit of Serbal there was not much to be seen, owing to the weather being cloudy and hazy. I saw a long range of hills, covered with snow, and soon descended, being in a hurry, and also feeling no great interest in the spot, as I see not the slightest reason for supposing that Moses here received the law. The difficulty (there is no danger) of the ascent of Serbal is indeed as nothing when compared with

the short cut to the top of Sarábut el Khádem, but the difficulty must have decreased in modern times, owing to the Arabs having placed rude stone steps, and otherwise facilitated the ascent, for earlier travellers speak of the matter, as regards fatigue and even peril, in terms now quite inapplicable.

After descending and taking a farewell draught of that sweet water of Wady Feiran, which for awhile arrests the steps and tents even of the wandering Bedouin, we mounted our camels and set off for the convent; my wife and I riding on one camel, and Suliman on the other. We passed through the remainder of Wady Feiran, which is very picturesque; on the left hand, on the top of a hill, was a large ruin; we then came out into the noble plain of Wady Shekh, from this plain Serbal is distinctly to be seen, and, if Serbal were Sinai, the Israelites must have been supposed to have encamped

here, but the valley is at far too great a distance for them to have heard an ordinary voice, and also for Moses to have gone up and down again so readily as he appears to have done. In Wady Feiran they could not have encamped if, as it seems from the Bible, Sinai was in sight of all the people of Israel; for it is only here and there from Wady Feiran that Mount Serbal is seen. In Wady Shekh one of our camel drivers lay down to rest under the rocks, and I suppose slept there the whole night, for nothing was seen of him until next day. The readiness with which the Arabs dispose of themselves for the night in any locality, forcibly reminded us of the journeys of Biblical characters, such as Jacob and Elijah—now under a juniper tree—now in a cave—now with a stone for a pillow. I wished the Arab who continued with us to mount behind Suliman, but he said he would not till it was dark, but must

then because of snakes. The sun-set—and when the darkness came on, it seemed a strange thing for us to be wandering along, separated from our caravan, through the waste howling wilderness. On we went, and twice saw the fires gleaming in some Arab tents, and, spite of all the unmentionable vermin that would be sure to be in them, we could not help turning a regretful look in their direction, when the light of their fires glimmered fainter and fainter—and we went forward through the darkness.

The way now became rougher and steeper, and the Arab said we were approaching that awkward defile, the Pass of Howy. Just as we entered the pass, the moon, which hitherto had given us a little light, disappeared. We dismounted, for the thick darkness compelled us to do so, the danger from snakes being less than that of breaking our necks by a sudden fall down the steep rock. Having

each, with the exception of the Arab, drank a glass of brandy, we began the pass. The Arab, though the cold was intense, and felt the more after the heat of the day, with laudable conscientiousness, as a Mussulman, refused to touch the forbidden liquor. One of the camels had been the way several times before, the other never.

The camels now were suffered to go forward at liberty, the most experienced taking the lead, and we followed in silence the dark outline of our dumb conductors, lifting our hearts for protection to Him to whom the darkness and the light are both alike.

Again and again we fell, but providentially not down any of the awful precipices, which we knew to be around us, and which, when the clouds now and then parted, seemed by the light of the stars like black gulfs below. At last my wife's strength failed, and there was no

resource for her but to mount her camel at all risks, which she did, the docile animal kneeling to receive his light burden, and rising again with caution, as if aware of the danger. Several times she felt his feet trembling on the loose stones, and could not help uncomfortable reflections upon the consequences of a fall, but it reassured her to find the camel stopping every now and then to take a bite from the thorn-bushes. It was strange he could discern them in the darkness, and one would be almost inclined to believe, what the Arabs assert, that camels can see as well by night as by day. After going on, I know not how long, for progression in almost total darkness at a snail's pace is tedious and deceptive, we came to a stand-still—the Arab could find no way—the camels refused to move, and all we could make out was that we were in the midst of a brake of thick brambles: we could not see them,

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but there was no difficulty in feeling the thorns; and rustling noises in the bushes told us we were disturbing the slumbers of some creatures, perhaps snakes. While we were considering what was to be done—meditating upon the possibility of kindling a fire and staying there for the night, and calculating how long it would be until daylight; the camels, who, though they refused to advance, had been restless, discovered the way, and clambered over a ledge of rock about a yard high. The ground was now steep, but less encumbered with bushes—half an hour brought us to more level ground. The Arab said the worst he thought was past, and that I might as well mount; I did as he suggested, and, though the way was still rough, so tired were we, we fell off to sleep every now and then; in thus falling into dream-land we were continually in danger of falling also from the camel into the lap

of mother earth, which being full of rough stones would have afforded no soft resting-place for her weary children.

After turning by mistake into a court surrounded by a number of huts, that belonged to some soldiers of Abbas Pasha stationed there, and proceeding a short distance along a level of sand, that contrasted very favourably with the paths of difficulty in which we had been benighted, our Arab attendant called out that we had reached the foot of the convent, and looking far up the wall I saw a light glimmering. We felt delighted—now at last we had reached a haven of rest! not with more joy does

> "The sailor hail from far
> The silvery bursting of his beacon star,"

than we did that faint light in the wall of darkness above us.

What a crowd of thoughts passed through the mind! but (as we had had

next to nothing since breakfast) I think, though taking various forms, they all clustered round one central idea, "What shall we be able to get for supper? Will anything so carnal as a mutton chop be found among the holy fathers?" My heart yearned towards the Greek church —I had seen some jovial specimens of that community at Cairo—but alas! we were reckoning without our hosts; it was long past midnight, and not thinking it at all likely that any angels, whom they might unawares entertain, would be wandering about at that time of night, the monks were wrapped in slumber, or engaged in their devotions. Shout after shout of ours, though it echoed along the rocks of Sinai, failed to awaken the monks, or at any rate excite the compassionate interest of the fraternity. The light of the stars now made the outlines of our figures distinct, and as we four stood wistfully gazing up at the closed portal, I could

not help thinking we looked like a quadruple representation of that historical fox, who thought the grapes sour which he could not reach: the engraving of him in "Persian Fables," published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, is peculiarly touching; grief and resignation are admirably depicted in his up-turned face. However we were not resigned, and what with my Greek, Latin, and English, my wife's French, Suliman and the Bedouin's Arabic, had the brethren been on the alert, they might have enjoyed a Polyglot, though towards the close not of the most complimentary character: after a touching adaptation of the opening lines of the first eclogue, in which a fat monk figured as "Tityrus recubans," various mild scraps of Homer and Horace, I concluded with the most savage bits I could remember out of the Philoctetes of Sophocles, enforced with a well directed volley of stones against the

shutters of the convent. My respect for the Greek church was departing, and I felt keenly alive to the fact that it was schismatical and heretical, and decidedly in error both ritually and doctrinally.

However, neither entreaty nor obloquy were of any avail, and the Arab said the more noise we made the closer would the monks keep themselves, as they would imagine that the Arabs were attacking the convent. This being the case, we turned from the inhospitable hospitium in despair, and looked out for our caravan; but alas! though it started some hours before us from Wady Feiran, it had not yet arrived, having gone by a much longer route. Hence there was no tent, no food, no coffee! we thought of a fire but there was no wood to be got; the stony front to the convent was destitute even of a bush. Fortunately we had some quilts, which we were in the habit of putting under us when riding on our

camels, and wrapping ourselves in these we soon fell asleep with the thought,

"God and good angels watch o'er our sleep,
Bless us with slumbers peaceful and deep!
Sweet be our rest in Him
Till the bright stars grow dim,
And the earth's matin hymn
Break on the night."

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Morning however had not dawned, nor the stars grown dim, when Saleh and the caravan arrived. He said the ground was too stony to pitch the tent on, and indeed it was scarcely worth while to take the trouble, as "the night was far spent, and the day was at hand." An additional supply of blankets however added to the comfort of our "lodging upon the cold ground;" and pleased with Saleh's assurance, which he himself gave with evident satisfaction, that there were neither snakes, lizards, nor beetles in the neighbourhood, we slumbered again.

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It was broad day-light when I awoke, and looking up to the portal in the wall, saw standing there a venerable monk, gazing down with benignity. "The top of the morning to you old fellow!" said I, scarcely awake; "at least I mean χαιρε πατερ!" a slight smile passed over the face of the apparition, and he said "Good morning! How d'ye do?" Was it possible? I rubbed my eyes, was it some traveller? No—the unmistakeable cap and garb, and black beard, negatived the thought, so, without further queries, I said "We are very hungry and very cold." He let down a pulley and a hook, on which our letter of recommendation from the patriarch of the Greek church at Cairo was placed, pulled up, and inspected. We were next pulled up the side of the wall much in the same way, and conducted into a comfortable room, with a divan all round; the monks brought us some

sweetmeats, and arrack in minute cups, which was shortly followed by a capital breakfast of coffee, new bread, that would have done credit to a London baker, fresh fish from Tor, dates and almonds. Our English-speaking monk joined us; he took but little to eat, but seemed vastly to enjoy some cigars I gave him. This recluse, though highly intelligent and amusing was evidently a little crazy. He told me his mother was an Englishwoman, his father a Greek; I asked him what position he occupied, "I am," said he, "Professor of Belles Lettres!"

Although Stephens does not mention anything about his speaking English, I think this must be the monk the American traveller alludes to in the words—

"I had noticed that monk before. He was not more than thirty-five, and his face was as perfect as art could make it; and the sunbeams occasionally glancing through the thick foliage of the vines,

and lighting up his pale and chiselled features and long black beard, made him one of those perfect figures for a sketch, which I had often dreamed of, but had never seen. His face was thin, pale, and emaciated. He looked like a man who, almost before the spring-time of life was over, had drained the cup of bitterness to the dregs. If I am not deceived, he had not always led so peaceful and innocent a life, and could unfold a tale of stirring incident, of wild and high excitement, and perhaps of crime. He was from the Island of Tenos, but spoke Italian, and I had talked with him of the islands of Greece, and the ports in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, with many of which he seemed familiar; and then he spoke of the snares and temptations of the world, and his freedom from them in the convent; and above all, of the perils to which men are exposed by the wiles and witcheries of the sex; and I could not

but imagine that some beautiful Grecian girl, not less false than fair, had driven him into the wilderness. One of the other monks told me, that it was about the time the last of the pirates were swept from the Mediterranean that the young islander had buried himself in the walls of the convent. They told me too that he was rich, and would give all he had to the fraternity. Poor fellow! they will soon come into possession."

Thus writes Stephens, and I think the monk of whom he makes mention must be identical with my friend; I am inclined to think so from his appearance, his fluent Italian, which he spoke better than English, his complaints of the inconstancy of woman, and his evident acquaintance with the use of fire-arms. If my conjecture be correct, he had worn well; his black beard was indeed flecked with grey, but his eye retained its lustre, and his step was firm and dignified. His

usually unimpassioned manner was occasionally disturbed by the peculiar laughter and recklessness of expression to be found associated only with despair. He was dead to the world, and the world was dead to him; but still sometimes a sort of mental galvanism appeared to shake the stony fibres of his heart, and say, "there's life in the old hound yet." He checked these ebullitions, and seemed by his manner to imply, "I must be as a corpse —say not to me, Arise and live! cause not my troubled spirit again to roam the world." He evidently acquiesced in, rather than believed, the doctrines of his church, and strongly brought to my mind the wild language of Byron's hero—

> "Waste not thine orison, despair
> Is mightier than thy pious prayer;
> I would not if I might be blest;
> I want no Paradise, but rest!"

He had a copy of Stephens' work, which he prized highly; but when I

endeavoured to find out if he was the person therein alluded to, he evaded the matter, and clearly wished to have no inquiries made as to his antecedents. He was our constant companion during our stay at Sinai, and seemed to reciprocate the interest we took in him. But we must part from him for the present—for our breakfast is over, and the morning sun is shining in at our window over the summits of Sinai,—we shall meet with him again in the Bed-room of the Burning Bush. ..

CHAPTER VI.

THE BED-ROOM OF THE BURNING BUSH.

I HAD fully purposed sleeping a night on the summit of Jebel Mousa, close to the spot from which, according to tradition, the Law was given. There is a ruined chapel there, and also a mosque, either of which I could have made my dormitory. But so many objections were raised by all parties, and it was so intensely cold, there being snow on the mountains, and ice in the crevices of the rocks, that I was reluctantly compelled to abandon my

project. Suliman, I verily believe, was afraid of seeing the ghost of Mohammed, whose camel is said to have left his foot-print in the granite near the summit. However, though disappointed in this my first wish, I had the unexpected pleasure of a nap and a dream in the chapel that covers the spot where Moses saw the bush which burned but was not consumed. Peter, for that was the name of the monk mentioned in the last chapter, had taken us round on the day of our arrival to all "the curiosity shops" called chapels, which in any other place might have had a *Museum* interest, but in the neighbourhood where, in tones of Divine thunder, idolatry, whether of graven images or pictures (the sin of the Greek Church) was so strictly forbidden, they were a nuisance. At last we paused before the mosque, which is within the convent—a plain building, with a simple pulpit and prayer niche, and one lamp *not* light-

ed. "There is nothing to be seen here," said the monk, as we entered; "this people have no religion." I could not help thinking the building far better suited to the locality than all I had seen before, and feeling thankful that within the walls there was one place of worship, not "wholly given to idolatry." While we were standing at the door of the mosque, a lean cat ran out, and was immediately attacked by a fat cat from the refectory. "Ah," said Peter, "that cat from the mosque is a Mohammedan cat, and that from the refectory is a Christian cat, therefore they fought:" he gravely assured me that the Christian cat would never eat meat or even fish on Fridays; though I should have thought from her appearance the Mohammedan cat was the more given to fasting of the two. There was evidently a strong feud between them, but whether it resulted from odium theologicum, or not, I must

leave undecided. We then visited the principal chapel, that of St. Catherine, within which is the site of the Burning Bush. Over the spot is an altar, and three lamps are always burning, night and day,—outside the chapel we were afterwards shewn a bush of the identical kind which burned!

Within the temple of the Church of St. Catherine is, forming the roof, a beautiful Mosaic of the Transfiguration. There, also, for the adoration of the faithful, are the relics of St. Catherine, brought from Alexandria by angels who had never duly studied the twenty-second article of the Church of England. We saw, also, a grimly grotesque picture of the Last Judgment. There is but a step between the sublime and the ridiculous, and I never saw a representation of this awful scene where Momus had not lured the unfortunate artist over the bounds—I do not except the window at Magdalen

College, Oxford, wherein an ostler who cheated the painter is immortalized by condemnation to the infernal regions, nor Michael Angelo's fresco in the Vatican, where you may see Charon in his ferry-boat, reducing refractory passengers to something like order by banging them with his oar.

Dante may have written—

"Batte col remo qualunque s'adagia."

But that only involves poet in the same condemnation as painter. Only from the Bible descriptions, or sketches modelled almost verbally on them, do no ludicrous thoughts arise. The trumpet sounding, the stars falling, the heavens withering like a parched scroll, the land and the sea giving up their dead, the impenitent calling upon the rocks and hills to cover them from the wrath of the Lamb, the great white throne, One sitting thereon, the multitude that no man

could number gathered before, the books opened, the last sentence, the eternal parting—all befits the solemn theme; you are listening to language that wraps itself, without effort, round the subject—it is at once the language of "the glorious God that made the thunder," and also of Him that said, "Suffer little children to come unto me." But once let writer wander from Holy Writ, or painter, however faithful and devout, endeavour to realize, with mortal pencil, the grand ideas, and an apoplectic cherub, a mediæval devil, with horns and tail, or something of the same sort, is sure to mar the effect. At the foot of the picture of the Last Judgment, to be seen at Mount Sinai, there was an angel weighing, in a pair of scales, the actions of men, while a devil was endeavouring unobserved to put his foot into one scale, so as to make the sins preponderate. Another devil near was hurling the condemned into

the mouth of a huge monster. Close by, Peter shewed us, with great satisfaction, a warmly-carpeted place, "Where," said he, "we can, during service, meditate or take rest,—our worship is long, and this place is very convenient." It was, indeed, no "miserere" spot—I little thought I should take advantage of it, but so it came to pass on the night that followed our ascent of Jebel Mousa.

During the day, the third after our arrival, Peter had been in a state of wild excitement; I had obtained from the superior (no monk can leave the precincts of the convent without his permission) leave for him to accompany us to the summit of the Mount of the Law. We had another monk and an Arab as guides, both paid ones (the monk one dollar, the Arab seven piastres), but Peter was overjoyed to come along, and seemed determined to mark the day with white. He told us all the Greek and Arab legends

he could think of, of the spots we passed in our ascent, and much did he and we enjoy our lunch on the mountain's brow, here, however, I must confess he annoyed me; we were reading the Ten Commandments, and the account of the giving of the Law, and felt our minds on that mountain, which in all probability had witnessed the meeting between God and Moses, and had glowed beneath the feet of the Almighty, deeply solemnized, when suddenly Peter exclaimed, "Give me a cigar." I did so, and he, lighting it and throwing his legs out over the steep rock, cried, "There, don't I look like a second Aaron!" Spite, however, of this interruption, as we gazed on the wild sea of rocks below and thought of the Awful One that once made the mountain peaks, which melted at His coming, vocal with the commandments that are binding on man for ever, we felt *as we wished to feel;* the longings of childhood were realized!

and the white granite platform on which we stood seemed to throb with the Divine presence.

True Veneration, which enters not "a chamber of imagery," will alight upon a barren rock, and bless God that her resting-place is not defiled by the mummeries of superstition.

While gazing on the scene of "the terrors of the law," I trust we were thankful that we had not to come, as far as our salvation was concerned, "unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:—but unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are

written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." And I trust also that we earnestly prayed in spirit, that we might be enabled to comply with that request of Him, who hath redeemed us from the curse, but not the obligation of the Law, "If ye love me keep my commandments."

The hand that pointeth to thy Law
And bids us keep it now,
Is not a hand with lightning wreathed
On Sinai's rocky brow:

It is a hand the nails have torn,
A hand that bled for me,
A hand that washed out with its blood
All mine iniquity!

As we descended, we noticed that the rocks appeared to have been rent asunder by an earthquake; the sun was setting,

and we watched for some time its light creeping up the sides of a mountain opposite the Derb Mousa (way of Moses), by which we came down; when we lost sight of the sun's beams in this direction we turned round and saw his rays still lighting up a cross fixed on the summit of one of the peaks. We were walking in comparative darkness, but brightness still lingered round the emblem of our faith in Him "in whom the Father is ever well pleased."

Though in the gloomy path I tread,
No light of heaven I see,
Yet does the Father's favour shine
On One that pleads for me.

Peter spent the evening with us; on the morrow, according to the Greek ritual, the fast preceding Easter was to commence, and as he poured the goat's milk into his coffee he exclaimed, "The last for forty days!" I put into his hand two homilies, translated into modern

Greek, and published by the Prayer-book and Homily Society. He at once read aloud, or rather, preached them with great effect; when he came to any striking passage he would read it three times over, first in his natural voice, then in a musical undertone, then, fixing his eyes upon us, and stretching his arm to the full extent, in a voice of thunder. I could have imagined him to be his apostolic namesake addressing the multitude upon the day of pentecost. Pity, thought I, that, instead of being immured within convent walls, groaning vain repetitions, he is not in Greece, preaching to his countrymen the words of the everlasting gospel. I told him so when he had finished, but he shook his head and lit a cigar. About half-past eleven he arose to depart, as he said he must go to his cell before midnight service; I promised to follow him to the chapel. Accordingly, when the bell sounded, I started; I

thought, even "nocte sublustri," I should be sure to find my way, but I was mistaken. The convent is like a little town with narrow streets, and in a labyrinth of these streets, or rather, passages, I was soon lost; the bell stopped—I was in hopes of meeting some one, but no, all were asleep or at church. I met a cat, I do not know whether she was a Christian or Mohammedan; she was not frightened, from which I conclude the monks treat the cats well, and purred like an English cat, rubbing herself against my legs, but she could give me no information as to my whereabouts. I got into a monk's bed-room, the door of which was open,—he had not been long gone, for, as I felt about with my hands, I found the bed was warm. I had a great mind to get in and tuck myself up, but I was bent on the service. Within these holy precincts I was sure not to have my pocket picked, or to be knocked on the head, or anything

of that kind, but I knew there was a well somewhere in the neighbourhood, and I had no inclination to search for truth at the bottom of it. It was provoking—I was close to the chapel, for I could hear the monks grunting like dyspeptic pigs, but I could not find the door. At last the sounds became more distinct, I could even hear "Κυριε ελεησον," by the way, the monks of Sinai always pronounce the last syllable of ελεησον as if it were *sawng*. Soon, however, one door I tried gave way, and I was in the midst of the holy fathers, who each had a lighted dip in his hand.

The license of conversation reminded me of a Jewish synagogue, for the officiating minister, I don't know how else to designate him, as soon as he saw me, called out to a monk to make me comfortable, and then, the service going on all the time, several monks made various suggestions, hallooing across the

chapel without the least ceremony. I listened for a long time, but could make but little of the service, except that there was a vile noise, and a great deal of tallow wasted. I bethought me of the well carpeted room near the Burning Bush —I found it—I sat down to meditate—I thought over the early life of Moses—I thought of what Keble says of the Jews in the "Christian Year," when on the subject of the burning yet unconsumed bush—

> "Salted with fire they seem to show
> How spirits lost in endless woe..
> May undecaying live.
> Oh, sickening thought! yet hold it fast,
> Long as this glittering world shall last,
> Or sin at heart survive."

But after a time I began to confuse things that are not with things that are. I confounded the monotonous chanting of the monks with the bleating of Moses' flock, and took the burning lamp for the Burning Bush.

Somnus (I suppose the drowsy god, seeing so many pictures, and smelling so much incense, imagined the chapel to be a heathen temple) drew near to me, and,

———"ramum Lethæo rore madentem
Vique soporatum Stygia, super utraque quassat
Tempora.——
Vix primos inopina quies laxaverat artus,"

when I, being in a much safer position than the steersman of Æneas, when he took his fatal nap,

"That moment felt endued
With power to dream deliciously."

Methought I was wandering outside the convent, at the foot of Mount Sinai, when, passing round the huge mass of stone from which, when stricken by Moses, they say the water gushed, I suddenly saw the Prophet, in a glow of light, dressed like a Bedouin, with crook in hand, gazing earnestly at a burning bush —his flock was feeding behind him. I

was just about to exclaim, how like Moses is to the shekh of our Arabs! when something seemed to frighten the flock of sheep, and they ran off, their feet clattering over the stones. I awoke—the noise was made by the monks leaving the chapel, the service was over, and looking up, I saw, not Moses, but Peter, with a naked candle in his hand. I arose, and followed him. Under his guidance I soon found myself again on the balcony in front of my room.

Neither he nor I were now inclined for sleep, so we walked up and down, conversing on various subjects for about a couple of hours. Peter gave me several scraps of curious information.

I asked him what would become of a monk if he was discontented with convent life at Mount Sinai, and wished to leave.

"He would not be allowed to do so," said Peter.

"But supposing he tried to run away —what then?"

"He would *disappear*," he replied.

"Do you mean," said I, "that he would be put to death?"

"He would *disappear*," he persevered sadly.

This mysterious euphemism, especially as the expression came from a Greek, reminded me of the passage in Thucydides, Lib. VIII. c. 38:

"Θηραμένησ—ἀφανίζεται."

I told him, that when I wished to purchase a small picture, rather the worse for wear, and placed in a dark corner of St. Catherine's Chapel, as if of no value, a monk, to whom I had applied, informed me that the picture could not be sold, being a sacred thing, and that when the pictures were too old to continue in the chapel, an angel came and took them up to heaven!

I asked him if he ever remembered an angel fetching away any pictures. "No," said he, laughing, "no such thing has ever been done, at least," added he, "in my time."

This last saving clause brought to my mind the reply of the martyr, who, being asked if he believed in Purgatory said, "Yes—if any such place be mentioned in Holy Scripture."

Relics he looked upon as souvenirs, and nothing more, and compared the keeping of them to my pocketing bits of granite, as he had seen me do from the summit of Jebel Mousa, to take to England.

He spoke respectfully of oral tradition, but his ideas of tradition extended far beyond the "Church" view, both as regards belief and practice; "for," said he, "everything believed from time immemorial must have something of truth in it, and everything practised from time immemorial must have good, or the phantasy of good, in it."

"How then is it," I rejoined, "that traditions often contradict each other?"

"Do not our friends also in their speech often seem to contradict each other, and

yet the contradiction is only apparent, not real? The Egyptian may say, it never rains; the Greek, it always rains in winter —both are true."

"But," I persevered, "what do you say to the tradition, that an angel comes and takes your worn-out pictures to heaven?"

"*I* did not tell you that," said he; "but," he quickly added, I can account for what was told you: are not the damp and wind messengers of God?" I assented.

"Well then," said he, "if a picture is never taken from the chapel, but is suffered to decay, may it not be said to be removed by the angels of God?"

"True, but do you think the monk that gave me the story, took that view of the matter?"

"Oh no," cried Peter, with a laugh, "he thinks an angel flies down for the pictures."

"Then *you* do not believe this?"

"I do not say I disbelieve it; but any way I have shown you that there is somewhat of truth in the tradition."

"Do you not think," said I, "it is very sad for any one to believe such a silly story, as a religious truth?"

"No," answered Peter; "what harm does it do the man you talked with? He believes the tradition, you do not—what are you or he the better or the worse for believing or disbelieving?"

Well, thought I, I will try your tender dealing of tradition, by speaking of a Mohammedan legend, so said—"What do you think of the print of the foot of Mohammed's camel, which we saw on the mountain to-day?"

"That conveys a truth," he replied: "I doubt not Mohammed visited Jebel Mousa as a pilgrim, for the spot has ever been esteemed sacred among the Arabs, for Mohammed's sake, and, in remembrance of his visit, he, or some follower of his, cut out a representation of a camel's foot; not because Mohammed rode a camel to the top, but because the camel is an emblem of

patience, and 'Resignation' is 'Mohammed's creed."

Peter (I record his conversation, because in the midst of superstition he was an independent thinker,) said he thought we were bound to observe the Levitical Law as regards clean and unclean things, etc.; it being the record of the experience of what is best for man.

He had a strong idea of *Physical Sin:* "If," he remarked, "I eat that which disagrees with me, and hurts my stomach, I as really sin as if I do that which depraves my soul."

But for his despairing, reckless negligence, and partial insanity, Peter might have been a great reformer in the convent; but he was an Erasmus, and not a Luther, and he had no taste for knocking his head against the follies his shrewd understanding despised.

When I left him, and returned to my room, I was soon asleep, but awaking at

day-break, I heard Peter still pacing the corridor in front.

He was a strange being—a prisoned eagle, that had almost, but not quite ceased "to nibble at his narrow cage." I often wonder whether he is yet alive, or whether his bones are by this time piled up in the dark charnel house, where he shewed us a vast number of skulls placed together, row above row—skulls of all sizes, with and without teeth, and fleshless limbs, with the lank fingers and toes projecting like various sized staples from the wall of bones: and where he shewed us, with a mournful look, more mournful than I ever saw him manifest upon any other occasion, in a basket, the bones, as he told us, of his oldest friend, who had come with him across the desert.

He turned the white dry bones over and over in his right hand, and became so abstracted as to burn the fur of his robe

with the censer of incense he held in his left.

I shall never forget him, and Mount Sinai is almost as much associated in my mind with this monk as it is with Moses.

CHAPTER VII.

AN EVENING PARTY WITH A ROBBER TRIBE AT NUKL.

THE expression, "an Evening Party," does not generally wake the most delightful memories.

A College Breakfast, after a trot in Christ Church meadows, (I am thinking of Oxford,) or the parks, and after morning service in chapel, is a very pleasant thing. By that time the stomach is alive to its responsibilities—I see, and can almost smell, the beef-steaks, the chicken and sausages, the devilled kidneys, the

juicy tongue, the fragrant coffee, or, for those who prefer it, the nut-brown Elizabethan ale, and spicy cider-cup.

I see the imperturbable scout, who will stand any amount of chaffing—I hear again jokes, old and new; the last bilking of "the bull-dogs;" the last racy rendering of a passage in Aristophanes.

A Dinner Party too—cold and un-English must be the heart that glows not with pleasing recollections at the sounding of "the tocsin of the soul, the dinner bell."

> Those dinner bells! those dinner bells!
> Of many a spread their music tells.

A hearty welcome, and plenty of provender (not too much plate and flowers—"Persicos od"—no, I won't trot out that old quotation), are sure to make all right. However staunch a Conservative you may be, you could not quarrel with that Radical who, in helping you to sauce, put so

many oysters on your plate. Nor can you, though yourself a strict churchman, entertain unkindly thoughts towards that pretty dissenter whom you have just helped to a liver wing. And when the cloth is removed, and the ladies are gone, if the conversation be neither very amusing or very instructive, good wine and walnuts help it amazingly. But an Evening Party, following upon tea-drinking and muffin-hunting! Alas, alas! Do you not at once think of an interminable, difficult piece of music, requiring great execution, during the performance of which you felt as if you were the condemned criminal, being slowly executed; and how, when it was over, false dog as you were, you exclaimed, "a beautiful thing!" and added, in an under tone, in "Mamma's" delighted ears, "and admirably played too!" Do you not think of the dreary attempts at conversation (everybody feels bound to talk) to which scandal gave the

only piquancy? But I need not evoke the horrors from "the vasty deep," for they are known to every one.

I saw this morning, in my *Literary Gazette*, a review of a book, with the curious title, "Texts for Talkers," designed to supply people with subject-matter for such occasions. The book appears to be quite as absurd as you would anticipate it to be, suggesting, that when there is an awkward pause in the conversation, you may break a silence occurring at a dinner party, with the startling statement, "Sin has its uses." But ridiculous though the book be, its very existence shows the dreariness of the scenes that could call it forth. Of course there are exceptions to the generally melancholy character of evening parties—as when you are among very intimate friends, who, not feeling bound to teaze, I ought to say amuse you, allow you to be comfortable: or, when kindred

spirits (forgive my employing the hackneyed term) being met, some religious, political, or literary subject is freely discussed. But still, in spite of these exceptions, I think it will be allowed, that evening parties are means of killing, not enjoying time.

When, however, the scene of your evening party is the desert of Israel's wandering; your roof the sky; your floor, sand; your guests, some forty bandits, armed to the teeth; and the conversation turns upon plunder, the great advantages of freedom from all law, blood feuds, and such-like topics, the thing becomes more exciting.

Before starting from Cairo, I was advised, instead of proceeding to Akaba, (the shekh of which place is most extortionate,) after leaving Mount Sinai, to go northwards to Nukl, and under the protection of tribes, who on account of their plundering propensities have gained the

appellation of "the Robber Tribes," to visit Petra. I acted in this respect as advised by Mr. Walner, of whose ability as English Consul at Cairo, I cannot speak too highly, and by Mrs. Lieder, the clever, good-tempered wife of the excellent Missionary there.

Though, from circumstances which I will mention presently, prevented from visiting

"The rose-red city, half as old as time,"

I had no cause for regret, as I was enabled to take Sarabat-el-Khadem in my way, to converse with genuine descendants of Ishmael, and explore a tract that has been but seldom traversed by Europeans. There is a range of mountains running, to speak roughly, from east to west, dividing the southern part of the peninsula from the northern: these mountains are called the mountains of El Tyh, or, The Wandering. At a short distance, the whole range of mountains appears like

one vast grey wall, and no path is to be seen; but, as you draw near, you descend into a steep defile, and then enter on a winding, upward way, too steep, and too much incumbered with jagged stones to admit of riding. When we passed, there was a blazing sun, and the heat reflected from the rocks was overpowering. Our camels, toiling under the weight of our luggage, wound round and round among the precipices: at last, the camel with the heaviest load, the canteen and provision box, fell down, and we feared would have rolled down the rocks and been dashed to pieces. This camel was a strong one, though old, and we had noticed, never grumbled like the other camels; its load was taken off, and an exchange made between it and another camel, who had had previously a light load. After a time, the same camel fell again, and cut itself on the rocks so as to bleed much; it was piteous to hear the poor creature,

hitherto so patient, moaning (there is something almost human in the camel's moan) as the Arabs tried to raise him, but there was no use wasting time in sorrow—we got him on his legs at last, and he did not fall again. We were about three hours ascending this mountain.

On reaching the summit, there was a splendid view; just before our feet yawning chasms—farther off, the plain we had crossed in the morning, with its by no means contemptible rocks and hills, looking, from our great elevation, like mole-hills—beyond, were the crags of Sarabut-el-Khadem,—still farther off, the great rough black back of Serbal—to the left, the shadowy range of Sinai—yet remoter, and to the right, was a dim outline of mountains, whose name I do not know; I should like to have asked the shekh, but he and all the Arabs were too busy watching and guiding the camels to

be able to attend to my enquiries, and when we got to level ground the view was lost. After toiling to the top of this chain of mountains, you expect to have a descent somewhat proportionate to the ascent; but no, you come at once upon table land; —you first reach a picturesque spot, where there is abundance of water in large basins of rock, each basin being lower than the other; the water trickles on, till at last the overflow falls into a very deep chasm between the rocks, and apparently cut out by winter torrents: round the water are many shrubs, broom, southern-wood, and manna trees, and two low palm trees. I saw several curious birds and a number of swallows skimming over the water, which abounds in tadpoles, which I am glad to say Saleh had the good taste to strain out before he made us some coffee. I saw two large round-headed lizards; I caught one, and he seemed rather viciously inclined, but the Arabs told me that

though they would bite, their bite was not venomous. Snakes here are abundant. This place passed, you traverse a flat of shifting sand, boundless to the eye; here the mirage is constantly around you, and the sand often rises in columns that may overwhelm the traveller. This was the region where the rebellious Israelites, who after all the miracles they had witnessed, distrusted God at the very margin of the Land of Promise, roamed until they dropped away one by one, leaving to their children the hope of entering that good land, of which they had proved themselves unworthy.

What an awful doom—to be at the very gates of Paradise, yet know that the entrance to it was guarded by the flaming sword of God—to know, while treading again and again with weary feet the same barren wastes, that lands flowing with milk and honey, forfeited by their unbelief, were at no great distance. How tantaliz-

ing to the Israelite, whose tongue was parched with burning thirst, must have been the remembrance of the grapes of Eschol! Wonder not, reader, that he murmured—how often hast thou murmured at much lighter trial!

I can imagine some dying Israelite with tearful eyes, laying his withered, feverish hand upon his child, and crying, "Oh for the cool breeze, the rustling of the leaves, the rippling of the waters, in the land promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob! I shall never see them child, but thou wilt."

The whole district seemed to me like a vast grave-yard, with the one comprehensive epitaph, "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

In the midst of this "Desert of the Wandering" we came to the fortress of Nukl. This fortress lies on the route of

Mohammedan pilgrims from Cairo to Mecca; it is a plain, square building, with a village of mud huts on the Sinai side. The garrison consists of twenty-five soldiers and a governor. The duties of the governor, as far as I could gather, consist of smoking and drinking coffee with his men, and receiving bucksheesh from the fellahin, or villagers. These fellahin, who, instead of roaming from place to place, and dwelling in tents like the Rechabites of old, prefer to dwell in huts clustered round some spring or reservoir of water, are much despised by the Bedouin Arabs. Coward, cheat, liar, immoral character, are all implied in the reproachful ejaculation "éntah felláh!" *i.e.*, you are a villager. This expression is about the most insulting one Arab can use to another; and I do not think the low estimation in which fellahin are held by their countrymen is without foundation. "Cleanliness is next to godliness"

in more senses than one, and festering as they are in the filth of dirty villages, which would throw the stoutest-hearted Sanatory Commissioner (not to mention his wife) into hysterics, it is no wonder that they become physically degenerate, and morally impure. "It is not good for man to be alone," but it is equally true that, except where civilization is carried to perfection, it is not good for men to herd together. When Moses led the vast host through the wilderness, it was not considered beneath him by the Over-ruling Mind to direct attention to the most minute sanatory regulations: the Bedouin at the present day in the main observes these laws, though he knows not generally when they were made: the fellah neglects them.

As soon as we stopped, several Arabs, friends of my shekh Suliman, came and assisted in putting up our tent. They gave me the disheartening intelligence

that we should not be able to proceed thence to Petra. I immediately (it was then about 2 p.m.) took Suliman with me, and went to the governor. Suliman, who could scarcely limp along, from having unfortunately trod upon a nail, was inclined to take a very gloomy view of matters. Now that we were about to part from our Tor or Towarah Arabs and commit ourselves to the Robber Tribes, his mind was made up that we should assuredly be plundered and left to perish in the desert, if not murdered at once. As we walked over the sand to the governor's dwelling, I secretly resolved to give Suliman, at night, two of "Dixon's Antibilious Pills;" it was my general remedy for his occasional ill-temper and sulkiness, and seldom failed; he always took the pills with great readiness (all Easterns are fond of physic), and would I think have believed me if I had told him they would cure a broken leg. Reader, whenever

you feel depressed about anything, no matter what, or feel that indescribable but well-known feeling of a desire to quarrel with your fingers' ends (you have felt that sensation, it's no use pretending you hav'nt), whenever your servants are lazy, or your children peevish, take, or administer, as the care may require, some of these pills (I ought to have at least a dozen boxes of them gratis for the statement). The effect will be magical, I should almost think that the "Happy Family," where cats and rats, sparrows and hawks live together in harmony, must be fed on them. Depend upon it the peace of many a household is destroyed by

"That great seedy cucumber I eat yesterday at dinner."

We found the governor sitting, surrounded by his soldiers, in a covered passage opposite the open gate of the fort. At his invitation I took a seat beside him on the divan, and then ex-

pressed my wishes. "No," said he, "it cannot be; you cannot proceed to Petra."

I told him that the English Consul at Cairo had advised me to come to Nukl, because he had always found the Nukl Arabs faithful, and had desired me to send him word by letter what sort of reception I met with. I assured the governor that, if I was obliged to write that I had found it impossible to proceed from Nukl to Petra, no travellers in future would come to Nukl, but all take the old Akaba route.

He then said, that they were afraid to take me, on account of Syrian Arabs. I pointed to the guns and swords that were hanging upon the walls, and said, "Men with arms should never be afraid." The soldiers seemed roused by this, and loudly applauded my sentiment, they were evidently anxious for fun and fighting; but the governor, who seemed much more of a Jacob than an Esau, was not going to

commit himself to any rash acts or promises. He was not the man to peril the possession of his snug sinecure—the quiet enjoyment of his pipe and coffee, and the domestic pleasures of his harem (his wives were three)—for any chilvalric notions of honour. So, after three or four long and strong pulls at his pipe, he replied as from a cloud, "Well, I will send for the head shekh of the Tiyahah, and see what can be done; the English are my friends, and I wish to please them."

This shekh would probably be met with at some distance, and a messenger accordingly was dispatched for him on a dromedary. I returned to my tent, and purchased of the fellahin a lamb, or rather sheep, for my old shekh and his men. I gave three dollars for it, an exorbitant price, but I was too much annoyed at the delay in our journey to haggle over a dollar. As the fellahin of Nukl are very thievish, I had two of the soldiers as night

guards, to whom I gave five piastres (about a shilling) each; for which consideration they fraternized with my Arabs round a large fire, smoked a vast quantity of my tobacco, and, in order to shew their extreme vigilance, woke us about two hours after midnight out of a sound sleep, by a discharge of fire-arms, and then came to the side of the tent, saying, "Bucksheesh, bucksheesh!" for which latter proceeding, however, they got sternly reproved by our old shekh, who very properly considered it a needless attention.

Next morning betimes I expected the arrival of the Big Shekh, as the Arabs called him, but he did not come. The Arabs told me there was no cause for surprise, and that he would not be likely to appear till after mid-day; as when the messenger from the governor reached him, he would have, according to custom, to feast the messenger before he inquired into the purport of the governor's com-

munication. "The messenger from the governor," said they, "when he comes into the presence of the Big Shekh will say,—

"'I have a messenger from the Governor of Nukl unto thee.'

"And the shekh will reply, 'Tarry here, and feast with me to-night, and in the morning tell thine errand.'"

According to the prediction, soon after mid-day the Big Shekh came, accompanied by his followers. They seated themselves on the sand in a circle round our Towarah shekh, who had taken up his position in the mazurta: this was a species of panniers, in which my wife and I occasionally rode, on one strong camel, I on one side, and she on the other, balancing the vehicle, for I do not know what else to call it, by means of books, etc., placed on her side; when this was taken off the camel's back, one half of it, with carpets and cushions placed inside, formed a snug divan, with a back, in which our shekh

delighted to ensconce himself: we were well pleased on every occasion to see him thus comfortable, but on the days following, when we reoccupied our conveyance, had generally to regret that he had left behind him many *lively* remembrances, whose absence would have made the heart grow fonder towards the previous occupant!

When I approached the circle, they rose and saluted me, and I, after returning their expressions of peace and amity, took my seat on the ground next the head shekh: he was a young man, with very prominent teeth, but rather pleasing expression; he was accompanied by another man, much older, with a very bad look, who had once been the head shekh himself, but had been deposed for bad conduct: this latter had evidently strong natural intellectual powers, and exercised great influence over the young head shekh; his projecting forehead was deeply indent-

ed with cross lines, and his piercing black eyes moved restlessly from one person to another, like those of a panther watching for a good opportunity to spring at your throat. He seemed to regard your countenance more than your words. Saleh made some coffee, and put it and the fragrant weed into full circulation.

I talked to them pretty much in the same way that I had done to the governor and his men. I asked them if I was really to go back to England and tell my friends there that the Tiyahah were not masters of their own territory, and had been afraid to take me down to Petra. I told them we Englishmen were then taking their part against the Russians, and we little thought we were fighting for cowards, who were afraid to pass through their own land. They said they could not go unless they went in great numbers, and that the Arabs of whom they were afraid, more for our sakes than their own, cared

neither for Sultan nor Pasha, and were at deadly enmity with them even unto blood. I left them, and they, accompanied by our shekh, went off to feast with the governor. Hoping that the process of swallowing the boiled flesh of a fresh killed sheep (the invariable Arab feast) might have caused an alteration in their sentiments, after waiting a reasonable time, I went up to the fort, to appeal from Philip before dinner to Philip after dinner. I attacked them on the subject before the governor. He tried to make them accompany me to Petra, and tried hard; for I had hinted to him that, in the event of his persuading them, a good round sum should fall into his hands. He told them that orders had come to him from the Pasha, to drive off from the desert all Arabs to Cairo, or Syria, that they might be enrolled as soldiers; and that, if they did not take me, he would enforce the orders, and deal very

hardly with them. But all to no purpose: the idea of any one having any authority over them was evidently to them quite a joke. I offered the Big Shekh thirty pounds if he would induce his men at all hazards to force the way to Petra. "No," he said, "I cannot do it; you and the lady will be killed, and then a disturbance will be made about it by the English Consul at Cairo, and we shall be forbidden to enter any towns either in Eygpt or Syria." This is the only way the government has of punishing a Bedouin tribe: it is impossible to catch an offender in the Desert, for the Bedouin is like the Scythian of old, quite ἄπορος uncomeatable. But when the member of any tribe has committed some offence, which compromises the honour or interest of the government, that tribe is virtually shut out from every town or village in Syria or Egypt; for directly a member of that marked tribe makes his appearance, say to buy beans

or coffee, he is seized, no matter whether the actual offender or not, bastinadoed, and cast into prison; and this goes on until the real criminal is surrendered, or a very heavy fine is paid.

I then said to the Big Shekh, "If you will give us a boy as guide," (for even when there is a blood feud, no boy under the age of ten years is in danger of harm,) "I will purchase three camels of you, and, leaving my servants and luggage at the fort, my wife and I will go by ourselves to Petra, and return." "No, no!" at once shouted the shekh and his followers. "Why?" said I. "Because you will be robbed, and have your camels taken from you." "Who will do it?" said I. "*We will*," was the reply. There was nothing to be said to this—so I turned to my old shekh and said, "Get ready your camels, and in the morning we will return to the convent, or go to Akaba." But the shekh of the Tiyáhah at once exclaimed, "No,

that must not be, Towarah Arabs may take you back to Cairo, but nowhere else; you are now with us, and we must be your guides; we will take you to the convent, or to Akaba, or to Hebron; but with us you must travel, unless you return to Egypt; and we will conduct you faithfully and without harm, please Allah."

The Towarah Arabs said it was quite true, that the right of conduct from Nukl, anywhither save back to Cairo, belonged to the Tiyahah. This being the case, I said, "Then get me seven camels, and we will go on to-morrow towards Hebron." To this they assented, and the governor sent for his clerk to write out a contract; while this was preparing I sat on the divan by the governor, smoking a pipe and contemplating my new acquaintances. The clerk was an effeminate, sneaky looking fellow, with a voice like a eunuch's; he wore a dirty green turban, and was so loose-jointed and thin, that, when he

dropped into cross-legged position, to write, I half expected him to collapse into a heap of bones: however, he was a cunning scribe, wrote with a reed pen, and had an inkhorn that reminded me of Ezekiel.

Around was a glorious sight—reckless fellows with long jetty hair, and flashing eyes, now shrieking at some point in the contract, now taking long whiffs at their pipes, now joking with the governor, for whom their respect appeared by no means profound. What a contrast they presented to the Towarah Arabs who sat near—Towarah Arabs have simple yet fearless countenances—the Tiyahah have, in general, hard, savage features; there is the gentle blood of Amalek in the Towarah, the wildness of Ishmael, and the fierce, fiery wrath of Esau in the Tiyahah—both sets of Arabs are valorous and chivalrous, but there is a fierceness, and an adoration of plunder and fighting for its own sake,

in the Tiyahah not to be found in the southern portion of the Sinaitic Peninsula. It is in the Desert bordering upon the south-eastern part of Palestine, and upon Edom, that we must look for the Arab of prophecy, of whom the angel spoke to Hagar, "And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." On the Desert skirting the south-west of Palestine, are to be found the descendants of the Philistines, a thievish, lying, cruel set. When a caravan of pilgrims proceeds, by the short route, from Cairo to Jerusalem, in order to be present at the solemnities of the holy week, these "Philistines" attack the pilgrims, and often stab them slightly, to extort money from them.

When the contract was made out, the shekh dipped his thumb in ink, and pressed it on the bottom of the paper;

thus it was at once signed, sealed, and delivered. We were to have seven camels, and the price for each camel, from Nukl to Hebron, visiting Beer-sheba on the way, was 120 piastres, and ten piastres on each camel to the head shekh; two-thirds of the hire of the camels, and the shekh's fee, to be paid in advance. The shekh, who declared his determination of accompanying us himself, tried hard to have his food included, but this I would not consent to. I would advise travellers never, under any circumstances, to agree to find their Arabs' food—*food* is an indefinite term, and may lead to altercation. Give what you like—but make no agreement. Drive a hard bargain, and then deal liberally; for piastres given beyond contract, as bucksheesh, are more thought of than dollars which have been stipulated for. When the bargain was sealed by the shekh, I gave the clerk a dollar, and also a dollar to the governor;

it was droll to see the way in which the governor took the money—he just lifted it in the ends of his fingers, and, looking at it with an air of surprise, said, "What is this for?" but pocketed it without waiting for an answer. It is a very common trick with fellahin, when they have rendered you any trifling service, and you offer them what you consider a sufficient remuneration, but which they pretend to think too little, to say, "Oh no, I do it without money," and hold out the money for you to take back, expecting that you will double the sum. When this dodge was tried, I always took them at their word; the result of which generally was, that the originally proffered donation was soon humbly asked for, and travelled back from my pocket to the Arab hand.

All being settled, I asked the shekh of the Tiyahah, if he and his men would join us for supper. Nothing daunted by their previous feast with the governor,

they replied, though not exactly in those words, that "*they should have great pleasure in accepting the kind invitation.*"

So back we went, in a body, to the tents, where my wife and Saleh were anxiously expecting us. Night was now come, and an immense wood fire, fit to roast an ox, which Saleh had kindled, lighted up the tents, the sand, and the Arab faces with its cheerful blaze. There was opportunely at hand a fellah, offering for sale a fat sheep, and a kid, which was not fat; for all Suliman, the copt, could say in its favor, when I exclaimed, "Why that's all bone!" was, "No sir, I think it is not *all* bone—there will be the liver and the kidneys!" I bought the pair; Saleh quickly killed them, in orthodox fashion, and hasted to dress them, with an immense pilau of rice.

Fire, pans, pots, kettles, and caldrons being all in a state of readiness, not *very* many pipes had been smoked before the

savoury mess was handed round to us in bowls, which my cook had borrowed from the governor's cook. Between these culinary brethren, a sudden but deep friendship, which would have delighted the heart of Dr. Kitchener, seemed to have arisen. There was a steaming bowl, filled with boiled mutton or kid, and rice stewed in the broth, to every knot of four or five, and our fingers were soon busy at work. I ought to have mentioned, that we all rinsed our hands before eating—it is true, fingers were made before forks, but when you are plunging them into the same bowl with three or four others, you feel that it is extremely undesirable "to eat with unwashen hands."

My guests not having attended any lectures on deglutition, and being of opinion that "the pleasures of the table" consist in getting down as much as possible in the shortest possible space of time, the repast was soon over, and long

gapes and yawns showed that, what with my entertainment, and that of the governor, stomachs were well lined. It is considered graceful in the east, after a feast, to shew, by hard breathing, gaping, and yawning, that you have been well provided for.

Dinner discussed—the head shekh of the Tiyáhah, who was to be our future guardian, called to an attendant, who brought up a richly-caparisoned dromedary, trained to gentle ambling. "This," said the shekh, as the beautiful creature, whose mouse-coloured coat was as sleek and fine as that of a racer in first-rate condition, eyed us with an apparently scrutinizing glance; "This is the one I ride, but it shall be now for the lady: it will carry her more easily than ordinary camels." I thanked him, but asked, "What will you then ride?" "I will walk," said he. I told him I could not think of that, and that if he was really

determined to resign his own favourite for my wife's use, I would pay for an extra camel, that he might not have to walk. "No," replied he, proudly, "I am shekh, but I will gladly walk, that the English lady may travel with comfort." What he said he acted on; for he would neither make a gain of his act of kindness, nor demean himself by riding on an ordinary camel.

Before my wife retired to rest, preparatory to the morrow's journey, I called up the shekh of the Towarah, and his followers, who, having seen us safely consigned to our new guides, were to quit us next day: we thanked them for their fidelity and kindness; they kissed my wife's hand, and wept that we were so soon to part from them; they implored upon our heads the blessing of the "One Allah." I knew not *then* why their eyes were so full of tears, but I think I know *now*—I think they had a presentiment that the days of one of us were numbered, and

that the fragile form of her before them, though bravely held up by the dauntless spirit within, had already been breathed on by the angel of death.

My guests and I now re-seated ourselves, two deep, round the fire; on my right hand were the Towarah Arabs, on my left, the shekh, who was to go with us, his followers, and the deposed shekh; on the opposite side of the fire were Suliman and Saleh, and a large number of "umbræ," from the huts near the fort. One of the first things I noticed among the Tiyahah was, that some had a lock of hair projecting over the forehead. I asked what was the reason of this. "No one," replied the shekh, who had himself this lock, "is allowed to cut off that tuft of hair, until he has killed some-one in battle, or plundered an enemy. I," said he, "am a young man, but I hope soon to be able to cut it—we may meet with enemies as we go to Hebron, and then I

shall be able to distinguish myself; I have had, as yet, no opportunity." The deposed shekh, with a grin of satisfaction, that shewed all his "Carker" teeth, said he was able to cut this lock off when quite a boy, and, tapping his sword and his matchlock, told off the slain as coolly as if they had been partridges; his hand had evidently been red in the foray, but there were dark passages in his history, which made the Arabs, while they allowed him to be brave, look on him with dislike. I was glad he was not going with us.

I was anxious to know who, out of the motley group around, were to be our attendants. On putting this question to the shekh, a simple question, one would have thought, a tremendous uproar arose. It appeared there were many candidates for the honor; and though it was in the shekh's hands to choose whomsoever he would, every one had a right to set forth his claims. Had I not been aware

that altercations among Arabs of the same tribe are "sound and fury, signifying nothing," I should have thought they were about to enter on an internecine warfare, similar to that of the noted Kilkenny cats; leaping to their feet, and screaming frantically, they addressed first the shekh, and then me; even the little children, gathered round the fire, to stare at *Inglesee*, howled and shrieked; the camels, tossing up their heads from their beans, made night hideous with their discordant cries; the dogs, awakened from their slumbers, answered from the fort and village. A wrinkled old woman, the sole representative, at this time, of the ladies in our party, brought up, by the shoulders, her son, an ape-like creature, and, with loud vociferations, nearly threw him on me, doubtless wishing to signify that, of all guides and attendants, he would be by far the best. I looked at him, and said solemnly, "Aywah quíyis

ketéer!" *i.e.* "Yes, he is very pretty!" upon this, all laughed, but soon began their antics again. My wife called from the tent, "What is the matter?" The Towarah shekh, who, with his men, formed the only quiet portion of the company, at once gave the satisfactory reply, "One Arab fantasia, lady." Seeing there was no prospect of the hubbub ceasing, I arose and addressed them with great gravity, in English, accompanying my speech with the most imposing gestures I could command. This speech, as they did not understand a word of it, had a great effect. Before I resumed my seat, I appealed, in Arabic, to the shekh, and asked if what I said was not true. He, catching my cue, told them it was true, and that if they did not at once, without disputing, submit to his choice, I should on the morrow return to Cairo with Towarah Arabs, and the Tiyahah would be disgraced.

The storm was now over. If my unintelligible English speech had hit the right nail on the head, the shekh's last observations had clenched it. Even the mother of the ape-like candidate mumbled the lumps of white sugar, which I handed to her, with evident resignation.

The shekh said that, as he was going with us, (a compliment to himself,) and as we were English, (a compliment for us,) it would only be necessary for him to take, in addition to our own servants, Suliman and Saleh, two men and two boys.

He first of all called up the boys, whom he had fixed on in his mind. One, the wildest looking urchin imaginable, had only, in the way of clothing, a sheep-skin thrown over a shirt, that in the days of its infancy might have been white; he had no trousers, no sandals. Slung at his back was a silver ornamented gun, of which he was very proud, and he contin-

ually violated the rules of etiquette by turning his back to me, that I might behold and admire his weapon. He wore no cap or handkerchief over his head, which was shaven very close, except on the top, where five or six long, twisted, elf-like locks stuck upright. I felt an instinctive desire to scalp him, and bring his scalp home as a curiosity. All the time he was afterwards with us, the idea from time to time presented itself, and I often, half to his amusement, half to his horror, mentioned it to him. He by no means appreciated the prospective honor of having part of his head exhibited as a wonder, in England. The other boy, who wore a close-fitting skull-cap, and was *respectably* clothed, with a short sword by his side, had nothing remarkable about him, and looked as if (supposing a pig had not been an unclean beast) his paradise might have consisted in swinging on a gate, and eating fat bacon.

The shekh next summoned a man (if he deserved the name), degraded and emaciated to the last degree—a victim of hashasheesh—the only devotee of that "sister of sleep" I met with in the Desert. Many sensualists of this class are to be found in Cairo, but very few, happily, in the Desert. The specimen before me looked like a skin-covered skeleton, in which dwelt a lost spirit, shivering and struggling to depart; the eyes alone seemed really living, and they were full of evil. I had promulgated the doctrine of submission to the shekh in all things, and therefore could not object to this bag of bones forming part of our escort; but I felt greatly relieved when one of the soldiers of the fort came forward and said he had a debt against the man, and consequently, in accordance with Arab law, in that case made and provided, he could not leave the vicinity until the debt was paid. Mr. Skeleton was exceedingly

anxious I should discharge the debt, and so set him at liberty, but this (not being ambitious of his company) I declined. The man substituted for him was a perfect contrast—a tall fellow, fleshy, and black as a negro, looking as if he had just come from Day and Martin's, and had a good polishing, by way of attiring himself suitably for the journey—his wardrobe was evidently not extensive. The next who stepped forward was related distantly to the shekh—he was a *gentleman* Arab, a dandy, after a fashion—clothed in silk, with a turban on his head, a black moustache on his upper lip, a sword by his side, his girdle filled with handsomely-mounted pistols, and a short dagger. He told me he was the owner of two slaves, and also of that Oriental luxury, or nuisance, according as you like to style it—a couple of wives. To his joining our party I at once assented. We found him very polite, and very lazy. These weighty

matters being thus satisfactorily settled, we relapsed and collapsed into smoking and small talking.

I will only relate what information I derived that night respecting matrimony among the Arabs. Bedouin Arabs have no religious ceremonies at a marriage. If a man wishes any woman, he goes to her father, and states his desire. The father says, "How many camels will you give me for my daughter?" He replies, that he will give three, four, or five, as the case may be—the number offered varying according to the wealth of the suitor, and the beauty of the girl. If the father be satisfied, he takes a bit of straw or stick from the ground, and puts it into the man's hand, saying, "This is my daughter." The lover then names a day, and fetches the girl.

If a woman dislikes her husband, and he has fears respecting her fidelity, he will take her behind him, on his camel,

where ever he goes! If, however, the woman can run away, and get to another tribe of Arabs, one of the tribe with whom she has taken refuge will come and say to her husband, "Your wife does not like you—let her return in peace to her father's tent." The husband will then go to the father, and say, "Give me back the camels I gave you for your daughter." The father will reply, "When she marries again, the camels which are given for her shall be yours." Spite, however, of these mercenary transactions, I was told unfaithfulness and quarrels between husbands and wives were very rare. If a woman has been once married, *her* consent, and not that of the father, is required.

Sometimes a runaway match takes place. If the lovers are overtaken, both are *killed*, but if they get clear off to another tribe, after they have lived together for a time, the man will go to the father,

and say, "Here is *one* camel for your daughter." The father will reply, "Peace be to the husband of my daughter. God is great;" and the little difficulty is then settled. What a pity *patres-familiarum* in civilized Europe do not take this comfortable view of things. What a blissful state of society, where a sleek footman, who had run away with his master's pretty daughter, could return when the honeymoon was over, and say, "Please sir, here's a horse, or a donkey (perhaps the latter might be a more suitable animal) instead of your daughter," and the anxious parent should reply, "All right, Alphonse, put—I beg your pardon. Tell the groom to put the quadruped into the stable, and come with that runaway filly of mine to a quiet dinner at six.'

When our party broke up, some returning to the fort, some to the village, and some packing up themselves in blankets, by the side of their camels, on the sand,

daybreak was but a few hours off. I remained still meditating on the incidents of the past day, and probable events of to-morrow, and, as I walked up and down, thought of an expression my wife had uttered during the day—"What a wonderful part of the tasselated pavement of God's great temple is the Desert."

"Night is the time for sleep" was never an idea I could thoroughly entertain. I am inclined to think, whether in one's study, on the rolling wave when the saloon lamp swings restlessly to and fro, in the pathless desert, in the fields of Southern Italy, twinkling with the tiny stars of the fireflies, or in the deep hush of London an hour before dawn, there is a powerful presence, which departs, like the ghosts we shuddered at in childhood, at cock-crow.

I had been meditating, indeed, I know not how long, when I heard a slight noise, and saw *something big* creep along the sand.

I had my gun in my hand, loaded with swan shot,—(if you have a smooth bore, a charge of swan shot is far more useful than a single bullet). I might have fired at the object, had I not had, in boyhood, a lesson never to fire till you are sure what you are firing at. I was fond of ferreting rats, rabbits, etc. Now on one of my rat-catching excursions, I was accompanied by "a butty," as we say in Herefordshire, who had a double-barrelled gun. I was on the one side the rick, putting in the ferret, friend on the other, waiting to settle the rats as they popped out. The ferret had been long in, and made no sign. I, being impatient, got up a ladder which was leaning against my side of the rick, and peeped over—a gun was at once levelled, but before the trigger was pulled, providentially my comrade discovered that what he took for a rat was the top of my head. This taught me a lesson which, on this occasion at Nukl,

was of service. I watched the object— it crept over the ground, gathering somewhat here and there; at last it returned, and went into my servants' tent,—what was it, a wolf or a marauder? in a few moments it issued forth and kindled a fire! I drew near to the glimmering—and what was it? It was faithful old Saleh, preparing to make a rice pudding for the morrow—he had forgotten to do it in the evening, and it had disturbed his slumbers! I told him how near I had been to firing at him. His reply was, "God is great—God is good." And with this truthful sentiment let us end the chapter

CHAPTER VIII.

A NIGHT IN A CAVE.

Caves are so often spoken of in the sacred writings, that I was by no means sorry to be driven by the inclemency of the weather to take refuge in one for the night. It was in the cave of Macpelah Abraham and Sarah were buried—it was in the cave of Makkedah the five kings of the Amorites hid themselves in vain, after they had been defeated by Joshua. What a strikingly dramatic narrative is that in the tenth chapter of Joshua. The Lord saying to Joshua, "Fear them not!" the

discomfiture and flight of the Amorites, the great hailstones falling on them in the going down to Beth-horon, the sun standing still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, the five kings hiding themselves in the cave at Makkedah, Joshua, discovering their retreat, rolling great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and setting a guard, himself and his men still continuing the pursuit of the flying Amorites. Then, after a very great slaughter, comes the return to the cave; the five kings are dragged from their hiding-place, and, at the instance of their warrior-chief, the captains of the men-of-war draw near and place their feet upon the necks of the kings, Joshua exclaiming, "Fear not, nor be dismayed —be strong, and of good courage: for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight!" When the Midianites oppressed Israel, the caves were their refuge. A cave was the scene

of David's prowess and magnanimity, when he spared the life of the sleeping Saul, but cut off the skirt of his garment. By fifty in a cave, Obadiah sheltered and fed the prophets of the Lord, when their lives were in danger, through the hate of the idolatrous Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, whose daring fiendishness, briefly as we read its record in Holy Writ, gives a thrill of horror surpassing that excited even by Shakespeare's wondrous conception of Lady Macbeth. It was as Elijah stood in the entering in of a cave, that, after the earthquake and the fire, in which the Lord was not especially present, the still, small voice said unto him, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" But time would fail, were I to recount all the Scripture references to caves, though they passed through my mind as I lay in a cave, near Hebron, gazing, half in a dream, at the blaze of the night-long watch-fire, and listening to the pattering of the rain on

the shrubs outside, and on the vast rock over my head.

We parted, kind reader, at Nukl, and I must not detain you by detailing the incidents which intervened between our leaving that place and reaching the borders of Canaan. I will merely mention that on one occasion we were attacked by two hundred armed "Philistines," from the neighbourhood of Gaza, but providentially, by quiet fearlessness, in which my wife nobly bore her part, (and I think the sight of an Englishwoman, undaunted when swords were drawn, and guns cocked, had a great effect in "astonishing the natives,") we got off without hurt to person or purse. On another occasion, when our tents were pitched for the evening, in the midst of upwards of a thousand Arabs, they made the pleasing suggestion that, as Christians, we ought to be killed; and their shekh came to our tent, to tell us to keep a strict

guard all night, as he could not answer for his men. I made a joke of the matter. We mingled freely with the Arabs, giving a little tobacco here, and a little white sugar there. Saleh declared to the numerous persons with whom he quickly formed acquaintance, that we were not blasphemers of Mohammed, and that we detested the Russians; and before night, the general impression seemed to be, that, *for* Christians, we were tolerably decent people. However, remembering the proverb, "Be able for thine enemy rather in power than in use," we watched in turns, all night, and if murderously assaulted, should doubtless have, before our own destruction, made our assailants conscious of our bravery. We had, however, no interruption.

In the morning an old woman came to me, and asked me to come and see her son, who was very ill. I went, and found him in the last stage of consumption—

the only case, by the way, of this terrible disease, I saw or heard of in the Desert. I told him to drink as much fresh goat's milk as he could, and left him some port wine, bidding him take a little when he felt exhausted with coughing. His mother, with all a mother's anxiety in her tearful eyes, asked if he would recover. I replied, "If God pleases—but if not, God is great, heaven is peace." She blessed me in the name of Allah, and kissed my hands again and again. Poor woman! "he was her only son, and she was a widow."

But *cave—loquax lingua mea*—we must on to the cave.

It is very pleasing, after a sojourn in the Desert, to note the first *dawn of green.* Three days before we came to Beer-sheba, which retains its name, where we saw, I think undoubtedly, the well mentioned in Scripture, we noticed the hills were covered with a sprinkling of fine grass, then

came the beautiful Persian iris and the scarlet anemone, at every hour's advance, in greater abundance, till at last we trod a gorgeous carpet of flowers. The limits of Nile-watered Egypt are sharply defined, but the Desert of which I am speaking, gradually melts into "the land flowing with milk and honey." By the way, the scarlet anemone is thought by many, with good reason, to be the flower of which our Saviour speaks, when he says, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow—they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, oh ye of little faith?" The gorgeous scarlet of the anemone suits well the reference to the royal robe. If the anemone be not the flower alluded to, has not the iris, with

its vivid purple, some claim to the honor of having been noticed, in this passage of His discourse, by the Saviour? Both flowers, the anemone and the iris, from their abundance and their brilliancy in Palestine, cannot fail to attract notice; and it seems probably that the term κρί'νον, from the way it is employed in the Septuagint, may be used of any species of flower.

As we were passing along a narrow ravine between two craggy hills, a soldier, well-mounted and armed, galloped up to our rear, another, similarly equipped, descending rapidly from a hill in front, took up his position before. I soon found they were guardians of the Syrian frontier in connection with that horrid abomination, quarantine. They told us that it was their duty to keep guard over us until we had been duly examined by the surgeon at Hebron, which place we should reach on the following day. The rain,

began now to descend in torrents; and when we passed Daræa, a village built of rough stones, I proposed to one of the quarantine officers, that we should stop there for the night, but he objected, saying, as he pointed to the villagers, who stared at us as if we were wild beasts, "They are bad, very bad. I know a cave, an hour further on, where we shall be safer and drier." Less than an hour brought us to sunset, and to the entering in of the cave. The cave was a large one, capable of containing, with comfort, fifty men; it was situated half way up a steep hill, only to be approached by a narrow path in front—it was inaccessible from behind; as the huge rock that formed its roof beetled far over the entrance, not more than two abreast could come up the narrow way; and a dozen resolute men might hold the spot against two hundred. It was "a stronghold;" and it was glorious to think, as we

entered, that it was by no means unlikely that in this very spot David and his men may have lain concealed when Saul was in pursuit of them. The inner part of the cave my wife and I took as our apartment, dividing it from the exterior by what had formed the lower portion of our tent; and when the mattresses were spread on the ground, and a lamp was hanging from the roof of rock, it looked very comfortable. In the outer part, the Arabs, Suliman and Saleh, and the quarantine officers established themselves, and kindled, at the mouth of the cave, a large fire; the wind being in the right direction, we had the benefit of the warmth, without the inconvenience of smoke. While our evening meal was being prepared, I investigated the floor of the cave; it was of sand, strewn here and there with the shells of defunct tortoises. As the gipsies make a savoury meal of a hedge-hog, so do those among the

Syrians, who are not troubled with scruples respecting clean and unclean beasts, of the tortoises. This fact accounted for their presence, or, at least, the presence of their mortal tenements in the cave. The orthodox way of cooking a tortoise is, first to cut off his head; if he draws in his head before you have time to decapitate him, wait quietly, put a bit of lettuce, or bread sopped in milk, before him—soon his head will again protrude, then let your knife descend like a guillotine; this done, stop up the orifice where the remainder of the neck shrinks in, with a bit of clay; put the tortoise in hot embers; after a steam arises, either through cracks in the shell, or from where his head ought to be, leave him five minutes, and then you have a dish fit for an alderman. Don't be in a hurry—don't break the shell, but through the neck-hole, with a very small fork, pick out the flesh, eating it with salt and

bread and butter. Isn't it delicious! Yes; but in all mortal pleasures there is some drawback or other; when you get towards the middle, there comes a bitter taste. What is it? Well, never mind—a tortoise is not a wood-cock.

Fired with the knowledge imparted to me by the Arabs, that tortoises were edible, and also abundant in the neighbourhood, and making the sage reflection that both tortoise and turtle begin with a T, I determined to sally forth in quest of a tortoise, and immolate him that very night. It was raining fast, but I was full of my project, and so, lantern in hand, went forth from the cave, descended the hill, and after passing, at its foot, the camels and horses, that were luxuriating in the rich pasturage, I reached a little stream, (tortoises haunt the banks of streams). I was commencing my search, when I heard a step, the step of one bounding rapidly along, and turning the

glare of my lantern in the direction of the noise, I saw my wild Arab boy, the owner of the sheep-skin and the desirable scalp, dashing down the hill towards me. When he came up, he addressed me with great volubility, but, as his dialect was peculiar, and he entertained that not very uncommon idea that in order to make himself intelligible to a foreigner, it was only necessary to speak very loud and very fast, I could only make out, "Mind his tail! mind his tail!" We walked up and down the margin of the stream, and at last, seeing a brown object scrambling through the grass, I put out my hand to seize it; but the boy, still calling out, "Mind his tail!" struck it with his stick, and killed—not a tortoise, but a scorpion! I thought we had bagged enough game for the night, so returned to the cave. The incident much amused the quarantine officers, who called upon Saleh to get a kettle ready to cook the

scorpion, a suggestion which, as you may imagine, that worthy functionary repudiated with disdain.

"Who hath not loitered in a green churchyard,
And let his spirit, like a demon mole,
Work through the clayey soil and gravel hard,
To see skull, coffin'd bones, and funeral stole,
Pitying each form that hungry death hath marr'd,
And filling it once more with human soul?"

Though I should be sorry to think my spirit was exactly what Keats styles "a demon mole," I am fond of re-peopling, as far as I can, by the aid of imagination, places with their old inhabitants; and, by mental alchymy, transmuting things that are into things that are not.

After my tortoise hunt, which ended in the way above mentioned, I amused myself until the small hours of morning by meditation on old Jewish history, and the endeavour to turn Suliman and Saleh, the Arabs, and the quarantine officers into David and his followers.

A sudden cry put an end to my reflections, and on inquiry, I found that the shekh's favorite camel had disappeared from the spot where he was tethered. The shekh could scarcely have manifested greater sorrow if his only son had come to an untimely end; and, indeed, there was good reason to fear that the disappearance of the camel was final, as we were at no great distance from Daræa, in which delectable village there is this custom, that no girl will marry a man who has not gained something considerable by robbery.

Morning, however, cleared up all doubt and anxiety, and discovered the errant darling browsing in security on a hill about half-a-mile distant.

A sunny day succeeded the wet night, and we journeyed on, through verdure and flowers, freshened by the recent rain —past fertile vallies of corn, nestling between hills covered with masses of

white stone—by enclosures full of olive trees—till at last, reaching the summit of a high hill, we looked down on *white* Hebron—bright and cleanly, in the distance (closer examination did not corroborate first impressions); we descended a steep decline, and having had our tongues duly examined, and our pulses duly felt by an agreeable French surgeon, (what French surgeon ever failed to make himself agreeable to foreigners?) and it having been decided that we were innocent of dire pestilence and contagious and infectious disorders generally, we encamped for the night in a Mohammedan graveyard, adjoining the mosque that covers the supposed site of the cave of Macpelah. Strange to say, no Jew is ever allowed to visit this hallowed spot, or even to approach near enough to it for the shadow of the mosque to fall on him. How true were the prophecies—how truthful the warnings given to the Israelites of old.

Directly you set foot in the Holy Land, you find the holy places of the unfaithful descendants of faithful Abraham trodden down of the Gentiles, and Ishmael once again mocking at Isaac.

CHAPTER IX.

A LIGHT SUPPER AT A LATIN CONVENT.

"'Reft of thy sons, amid thy foes forlorn,
Mourn, widowed queen—forgotten Sion, mourn.
Is this thy place—sad city—this thy throne,
Where the wild desert rears its craggy stone?
While suns, unblessed, their angry lustre fling,
And way-worn pilgrims seek the scanty spring?
Where now thy pomp, which kings with envy viewed?
Where now thy might, which all those kings subdued?
No martial myriads muster in thy gate—
No suppliant nations in thy temple wait—
No prophet-bards, the glittering courts among,
Wake the full lyre, and swell the tide of song.

But lawless force and meagre want are there,
And the quick-darting eye of restless fear.
While cold oblivion, 'mid thy ruins laid,
Folds his dank wing beneath thy ivy-shade."

HEBER.

AFTER a night's rest, which was slightly disturbed by the cries of wolves (one of them had the impudence to enter our tent, and carry off the remnants of our supper), we parted from our Tiyáhah and their camels, and mounting on Syrian horses, galloped over the hills, towards Jerusalem. As we were to take Bethlehem in our way, Suliman, *solus*, accompanied us, Saleh following at his leisure, with the impedimenta, on mule-back. It had poured of rain all night, and we had slept—not in that bug-bear of "anxious mama's," a damp bed, but in one saturated with genuine torrents, that soon turned the top and sides of our tents into "dripping sheets," which, from above, pertinaciously shed on us the "tears of

the stars," while through our tent, it being pitched on a declivity, an extempore stream meandered:

"Nocte pluit toto, redeunt spectacula mane,
Divisum imperium cum Jove *Phœbus* ha'bet."

A bright morning, good coffee, and fresh eggs, followed by an up-hill and down-hill gallop over the hill country of Judea, soon took off the "damping" effects of the past night, and sent us merrily on towards the spot which we all remember when the holly decks parlour and palace, kitchen and cottage, and

"The stars of Christmas burn."

The ride, or rather gallop from Hebron to Bethlehem, for the Syrian horses are long-winded and sure-footed, leaping, goat-like, from rock to rock, was "delicious." Well, indeed, does Canon Stanley say of it—

"The 'hill country'—'the mountain country,' as it is called, of Judah, in ear-

lier, of Judæa, in later times, is the part of Palestine which best exemplifies its characteristic scenery; the rounded hills, the broad valleys, the scanty vegetation, the villages or fortresses sometimes standing, more frequently in ruins, on the hill tops; the wells in every valley, the vestiges of terraces, whether for corn or wine. Here in this wide valley tract—the largest of the territorial divisions of the country—the 'Lion of Judah' entrenched himself, to guard the southern frontier of the chosen land, with Simeon, Dan, and Benjamin nestled around him. Well might he be so named in this wild country, more than half a wilderness, the lair of the savage beasts, of which the traces gradually disappear as we advance into the interior.

"Fixed there, and never dislodged, except by the ruin of the whole nation, 'he stooped down, he couched as an old lion—who shall rouse him up?' Through-

out the troubled period of the judges, from Othniel to Samson, Judah dwelt undisturbed within those mountain fastnesses. In these gray hills, and in their spacious caverns, David hid himself, when he fled to the mountains, like one of their own native partridges, and, with his band of freebooters, maintained himself against the whole force of his enemy.

"The tribes of the east and north were swept away by the Assyrian kings, Galilee and Samaria fell before the Roman conquerors, whilst Judah still remained erect—the last because the most impregnable of the tribes of Israel. * * * Here, more than elsewhere in Palestine, are to be seen, on the sides of the hills, the vineyards, marked by their watch-towers and walls, seated on their ancient terraces—the earliest and latest symbol of Judah. The elevation of the hills and table-lands of Judah is the true climate of the vine. He 'bound his foal

to the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.' It was from the Judæan valley of Eshcol, 'the torrent of the cluster,' that the spies cut down the gigantic cluster of grapes.

"A vineyard on a hill of olives, with the fence and the stones gathered out, and the tower in the midst of it, is the natural figure which, both in the prophetical and evangelical records, represents the kingdom of Judah. The vine was the emblem of the nation, on the coins of the Maccabees, and in the colossal cluster of golden grapes, which overhung the porch of the second temple; and the grapes of Judah still mark the tombstones of the Hebrew race, in the oldest of their European cemeteries at Prague."

Thus writes Stanley of the south of Palestine; and, always excepting the view of Jerusalem from the Mount of

Olives, I must give the palm of beauty and picturesque variety to the vicinities of Hebron and Bethlehem, and the country lying between them. Mounted on your spirited Arabian steed, you seem to flit, butterfly-like, over scenery that changes every moment.

Once we pause by the gardens and pools of Solomon, whence the loving Monarch of Jerusalem gathered much of the imagery of his glowing Epithalamium. Then on to the place which we have been thinking of for hours—the cradle of "God manifest in the flesh."

Desire and fear are often strangely mingled; who has not felt this mixture of feelings when about to enter, for the first time, the chamber where a beloved friend lies dead. You wish once more to gaze on the loved features, but still you shudder to realize your wish, and, perhaps almost unconsciously, you delay the time for so doing, and by various

little contrivances, and by even trivial conversation, put off entering the chamber of death.

So, when we knew that our eyes would soon fall on Bethlehem, by mutual feeling and unspoken consent, we slackened our pace, and ceased talking.

There was nothing remarkable about the first appearance of Bethlehem,—the religious houses and buildings huddled together over and around the centre point of attraction—viz., the cradle of the infant Saviour—have externally neither a grand nor a simple appearance; there is neither the Judean village, "simplex munditüs," nor the noble city, that might have made the hallowed spot its nucleus; but there is something pleasant in the merry twinkling eyes and full-blooded features of the modern Bethlemites, that breathes of "peace on earth, and good-will towards man."

On passing through the gateway of the

narrow entrance to the fortress-temple of Bethlehem we found its outer court truly a place of merchandise, but, I am happy to say, not a den of thieves or extortionate wonder-mongers, for very reasonable were the prices the cunning workmen asked for the shells from the Red Sea, curiously carved with incidents from our Saviour's life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension; for their glory-crowned saints, with starry diadems and bleeding hearts; and for rosaries of camel's teeth, "berries of Mecca," and wood from Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives.

It may be generally true that, as Keble says in his Good Friday hymn,

> "——— The darkest hour
> That ever dawn'd on sinful earth,
> Should touch the heart with softer power
> For comfort, than an angel's mirth!
> That to the cross the mourner's eye should turn,
> Sooner than where the stars of Christmas burn!"

But Bethlehem will ever be enshrined in

my heart as the holiest and most *endearing* spot in Palestine: it has echoed the songs of angels—it heard the infant voice of the Man-God: and not least, the instinctive feeling of veneration for the place was not violated by many tawdry decorarations, or any of "those prominently superstitious observances," which excite disgust in the shrine of the Holy Sepulchre. On entering the Grotto of the Nativity I felt really thankful that the owners had, amid all their follies, kept the good taste to leave it simple and elegant; the "altar" (above which silver lamps are kept perpetually burning) over the spot where the Holy Child was born, marked by a circle of agate and jasper, surrounded with a silver glory, did not divert the mind from, but rather direct the mind to the brief, but beautiful inscription: "Hic de Virgine Maria, Jesus Christus natus est;" and I did not envy the state of feeling in that man who

could cut, or rather scratch, alongside the above inscription—"J. SMITH!" Yet so it was, there was the odious name! It was a comfort to see, after J. Smith, "U. S.," and to know that the sacrilegious fellow was not a fellow-countryman. I have elsewhere vindicated the practice of cutting one's name in remarkable spots; but there are places which ought to be exempt, and I think among them the shrine of Bethlehem.

On leaving Bethlehem, passing the tomb of Rachel, etc., etc., we came in sight of Jerusalem, and glad indeed were we, for, after our long mountain ride, we were very hungry. We did not jump from our horses, prostrate ourselves on the ground, kiss the dust, or anything of that kind, but pushed steadily on, till, after entering the city, through the gate, beside which, Syrian sheep, with their bulky tails, and Turkish soldiers, from the neighbouring fortress, looking

as unmilitary as they well could, were crowded together in glorious confusion, we alighted at the Casa Nuova, built for the accommodation of strangers, by the monks of the Latin Convent. Soon the cloth was laid, and dinner announced. First, soup, this was poor enough; but one never expects much in that line; in fact, to judge by what you generally meet with, a good receipt for making soup for even an English dinner-party would be, wash a dozen dirty plates, and in the water, boil a little rice, maccaroni, or vermicelli, and then serve.

Soup past, and while expecting the sequences, I took up a decanter, poured out, and drank a glass of wine.

"They have brought vinegar, in mistake," said I; "never mind, say nothing about it."

"No, sir," said the attendant, Suliman, "it is the wine of the country."

After a little while, there came some

dates, oranges, raisins, and biscuits; very good things, in their way, but no substitute for the beef-steaks or the substantial joint that Englishmen and Englishwomen look for after a day's hard riding. For a time, we thought these toothsome trifles were intended as a "whet," but suddenly the horrid truth flashed upon my mind: we were in a Romish convent during Lent! Shade of Simon Stylites, with what pious indignation would'st thou have regarded our heretical stomachs!

We drew towards the stove, and I said, "I think it is hardly well for us to stay at this Romish place."

"I have been thinking the same thing," replied my wife.

"What do you think?" said I to Suliman.

"I think we will go," said he.

At this moment, in came Saleh; in the multitude of counsellors is safety; so I asked his opinion.

"We shall leave to-morrow morning," he answered.

"Why?" rejoined I; "I never told you so."

"No," said he, "but I saw what a dinner they sent you, and I knew it would never suit you or the lady; so I packed up all our things, and I've found two beautiful rooms in the house of a Jew, who has become an Englishman" (meaning Protestant Christian), "and you can have the two rooms, with use of a dining-room, kitchen, and sleeping-room for servants, for two dollars a-day."

"Saleh," said I, "you are a brick!"

We had been talking, up to this time, in Arabic, but his prompt appreciation of our feelings, brought this English commendation at once to my lips.

Suliman explained, or rather, literally translated my words; but as he told Saleh that what I was saying was, that he was an oblong lump of clay, dried in

the sun, or baked in a furnace, the subject of praise did not appear to derive so much satisfaction from my exclamation as from our evidently pleased countenances.

Morning come, we wended our way to our new lodgings, which were all that could be desired; and one of the first sounds that saluted our ears, while waiting for breakfast, was the singing, in English, of the children in the Protestant school. It was delightful to hear children, sons of Jews, Mohammedans, Copts, etc., singing, in our loved English,

"Awake, my soul, and with the sun,
Thy daily stage of duty run;
Shake off dull sloth, and early rise,
To pay thy morning sacrifice."

And

"There is a fountain fill'd with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

With these children, no controversy is used; they are taught, what is far better

than theological discussions, to read the Bible, and understand what they read, and to learn a variety of hymns, both in English and in their own tongue. The acquisition of an European language is much coveted in the East, and is a most important handle for missionary zeal to lay hold of. May such schools be multiplied. It was a true saying of a wily Jesuit—"Give me the lambs to train, and I shall soon have a flock of grown sheep."

After partaking of the tail of a Syrian sheep, cooked in Saleh's best style, (oh that the tails of English sheep would become as ample and juicy as those of their Syrian brethren!) we went forth to view the sacred city.

Be not afraid, dear reader, I am not going to fatigue you with a lengthy description of sights, scenes, and ceremonies, with which, in all probability, from stereoscopic views, panoramic views,

and books of travel, you are better acquainted than with many parts of your own country. I shall merely touch on a few points which struck me most,—steering clear of, as far as I can, oft-told tales and oft-described places.

The Psalmist says, complacently, "Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity in itself," meaning, I presume, that it was built compactly, and that its inhabitants were united, both in politics and religion. Could he now revisit the city, "walk about Zion, and go round about her, and tell the towers thereof," he would speak very differently, as he wandered through the narrow, rugged streets, and beheld the discord of its inhabitants. The Jew is dirty and degraded, the Mussulman sullen and cynical, and the various sects of Oriental Christians are united in nothing save hating each other, and degrading the sacred name they bear. If the latter were divided into a *Crass* Tripos, on inverse ratio, they would stand—

I.
(STUPID)
Armenians.

II.
(STUPIDER)
Latins.

III.
(STUPIDEST)
Copts
Greeks } Æq.

The only places upon which the mind can rest with satisfaction are, the schools and the church under the care of Bishop Gobat, who unites the dove-like spirit of Christianity with the wisdom of the serpent.

Our first visit was to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the object of our first curiosity the Holy Sepulchre itself, "a small oblong quadrilateral building of white marble, crowned with a tiny cupola, standing upon pillars and divided into

three compartments. The entrance is a pointed doorway, supported by slender spiral columns, on each side to which there is an ascent of two or three broad low steps. Above it are two or three daubs, intended to represent our Saviour's resurrection. The first compartment is an ante-chamber, of a size to contain six or eight persons, here the worshippers put their shoes from off their feet (this, however, is not required of Europeans) ere they enter upon the holy ground within; where, occupying half of the second compartment of the building, is the place where the Lord lay. The third compartment is a small chapel, appropriated to the Copts, which is entered from behind, and has no internal communication with the others. Opposite to the entrance of the Holy Sepulchre itself is the body of the church appropriated to the Greeks, in the middle of which is a knob of marble (I can call it nothing else,

though, perhaps, some ecclesiologist may have a name for the article) from which God is said by the Greeks to have taken the clay of which He made Adam! On the side nearly opposite the main entrance is the chapel belonging to the Latins. The Armenians, with their quaint dresses and craggy language, are up aloft; but I need scarcely mention that all sects have a right to visit and perform ceremonies at the several holy places, the only hitch being, when two parties want to have the same place at the same time.

It is a great comfort that the Eastern and Western churches differ about the proper time for celebrating Easter, it saves a good deal of blood-shed, and saves Mohammedan keepers of the place a great deal of trouble.

Mounting on a flight of stairs, on the right side of the main entrance, you reach the Chapel of the Crucifixion, where are figures, representing Christ

crucified between the two thieves, and you may see through a chink, a rock that was rent at the crucifixion! But away with monkish superstitions, and let us ask ourselves, are we standing by the sites of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection? This was a subject that occupied my mind much, during one of the nights which I spent in the church, and while I watched the devotions of the various sects. "Can it be," said I to myself, "that, after all, this spot, which Christians in general reckon holy, has no more to do with the sacred events popularly associated with it, than Mont Blanc or Saffron Hill?"

As I paced up and down the church, I went over the arguments, pro. and con., somewhat as follows:—

Contra.—The supposed Holy Sepulchre is too near the supposed site of the crucifixion.

Pro.—Nay, for the Scripture expressly says, "it *was* near."

Con.—But did not Christ go forth *without* the camp, bearing his reproach?

Pro.—Yes, but we have no right to judge of the boundaries of the ancient city by the boundaries of the modern one. After the destruction of the city by the 'Romans, and the reception' of Christianity by the Roman emperors, it was natural that the city should travel towards, and gather round the centre-point of interest.

Con.—But did not Julian the apostate, endeavour to destroy the cave in the rock?

Pro.—Yes; but by so doing he marked the spot, which is what we are principally concerned about.

Such was the conclusion I came to on the place, and I was glad afterwards to find that Bishop Heber, in his critique on Dr. E. D. Clarke's travels (whose scepticism concerning these sacred antiquities was great) expresses his opinion thus:—

(1) "One of the discourses of Cyril, patriarch of Jerusalem, incidentally proves two facts—viz., first, that the sepulchre, as we now see it, *was* without the ancient wall, and secondly, that before it was ornamented by the Empress Helena (with whom he was contemporary), it was a simple cave in the rock. (2) Further, that the present sepulchre, defaced and altered as it is, may really be 'the place where the Lord lay,' is likely, from the following circumstances:—'Forty yards, or thereabouts,' says Bishop Heber, 'from the upper end of the sepulchre, the natural rock is visible, and in the place which the priests call Calvary, it is at least as high as the top of the sepulchre itself. The rock, then, *may* have extended as far as the present entrance; and though the entrance itself is hewn into form, and cased with marble, the adytum yet offers proof that it is not factitious. It is a trapezium of seven feet by six, neither at

right angles to its own entrance, nor to the aisle of the church, which conducts to it, and in no respect conformable to the external plan of the tomb. This last is arranged in a workmanlike manner, with its frontal immediately opposite the principal nave, and in the same style with the rest of the church. It is shaped something like a horseshoe, and its walls, measured from this outer horseshoe to the inner trapezium, vary from five to eight feet in thickness, a sufficient space to admit of no inconsiderable density of rock between the outer and inner coating of marble. This, however, does not apply to the ante-chamber, of which the frontal, at least, is probably factitious; and where that indenture in the marble is found which induced Dr. Clarke to believe that the whole thickness of the walls was composed of the same costly substance. Now these circumstances afford, we apprehend, no inconsiderable grounds for

supposing with Pococke, that it is indeed a grotto above ground. The irregularity of the shape; the difference between the external and internal plan; the thickness of the walls, so needless, if they are throughout of masonry, all favor this opinion. Nor is the task ascribed to Helena's workmen, of insulating this rock from that which is still preserved a few yards distant, at all incredible, when we consider that the labor, while it pleased the taste of their employer, furnished, at the same time, materials for her intended cathedral."

Although the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has been burnt down, since Dr. Clarke's visit, yet the "rock-built sepulchre of the Messiah, being, of all others, the least liable to injury, has remained, in spite of the devouring element."

But now let us look around at the living beings. Throughout the holy sea-

son of Easter a sort of sacred pic-nic is held within the church. Pilgrims have thus the double advantage of saving hotel bills, and being always on the spot for their devotions.

During the night, the pilgrims eat and drink—yea, even smoke, with the greatest unconcern. Occasionally they get up for a mouthful of prayers, and then relapse again into eating, drinking, talking, smoking, sleeping, as before. Well do I remember one old pilgrim; he was sleeping beside his wife, with a girl, I suppose his daughter, on the other side. He awoke, felt in the folds of his vest for—a book? no, a *pipe;* he lit it with his flint and steel, and then gazed through the smoke meditatively at the holy tomb! Thus it is ever in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and who shall say it is wrong? The Apostle Paul says indeed, "Have ye not houses to eat and drink in?" The pilgrims might well

reply, "We have not." For my own part, I had much rather see the place used as a lodging-house, than degraded by superstition, and I shall ever remember with pleasure the nights I spent in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. On one occasion I noticed that a chant from a choir of Armenians below, was answered by a choir of Armenians in a high gallery above; each company taking alternate parts. It seemed like the church militant below and the church triumphant above answering one another. I believe this explanation of the music was the true one; and if so, it was

"A beautiful idea, and softly bodied forth;"

not "the nympholepsy of a fond despair," but a realization of the fact that we are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses, of whose song, ours should be the echo: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us by His blood."

"The saints on earth, and those above,
But one communion make;
Join'd to the Lord in bonds of love;
All of His grace partake.
One family we dwell in Him;
One church above, beneath;
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death.
'Worthy the Lamb that died,' they cry,
'To be exalted thus.'
'Worthy the Lamb,' our lips reply;
'For He was slain for us.'"

And now, kind reader, here at the gate of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, let us part,—I trust, good friends. I should like to have taken you with me to bivouac beside Elijah's fountain at Jericho; to the willowy Jordan; to the Dead Sea, that sea of lead, set in a frame of sulphurous dust, which seemed to fill the mind—forgive the Irish bull—with an aching void of desolation; to the mountains of Moab, where, in his unknown tomb, Moses sleepeth; to Bethel, where another Jacob might still find many a

moss-covered stone for his pillow; to the well of Jacob, or rather to that of Jesus, at Sychar; to Nablous, clinging to the foot of Mount Gerizim, on whose summit are the remains of the Samaritan temple, and where, to this day, the Samaritan schismatics keep the feast of the atonement; to the plains of Esdraelon, where the luxuriant vegetation overtops you as you ride on horseback; to the dew-watered mountain of Gilboa; to Mount Tabor, which, by the way, very much resembles the Herefordshire Beacon, three miles from Malvern, which is before my window as I write; to Nazareth, where is still shewn the synagogue where Jesus read of the year of jubilee; and the rock of precipitation, down which the enemies of Jesus wished to hurl Him; to the Lake of Tiberias, still noted for its fish, but which now no boat traverses; to the ruins of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, where, in swamps luxuriant

with oleanders, toad-like Arabs squat; to Hasbeyah and Rasheyah, since devastated and dabbled in blood by Druse vengeance following on Maronite intrigue; to Paradisaic Damascus, where we lodged in the street called Straight; to Titanic Baalbec, whose vast pillars and strange subterranean passages forcibly reminded me of scenes in Moore's Epicurean; to Lebanon, crowned with eternal snow, with Beyrout baking and broiling at its foot; to the Dog River, where you may see the counterpart of some of Layard's discoveries at Nineveh; to——, but I must forbear, and now say at once, for the present, *Layalek saced*, Good night!

ADDENDA.

As I hope this little volume will be the cheery and useful companion of many a roving Englishman, and many a roving Englishwoman, amid Eastern Lands and Eastern People, it will not be out of place to give a little plain, practical advice to those about to set out on their pilgrimage.

First, as to money.—Take as many English sovereigns as you think you can take care of: they are truly worth their weight in gold, which, as far as I am aware, is not to be said of the coinage of any other country. At Cairo, exchange your English sovereigns for Turkish dollars. For large sums, it is best to obtain, before starting, Coutt's circular notes: these any banker in England will readily procure for you, and they are payable at the principal towns in Egypt and Syria.

As to clothing.—Do not clothe yourself too lightly, for to do so is to make a great mistake, which may bring on diarrhœa, or even dysentery. In Egypt, after sunset, the dews are heavy, and the atmosphere is trying to weak constitutions. In Arabia, the nights are cold and chilling, and in Syria the weather is very fickle. If you clothe yourself as you would for a ramble through Wales or Scotland, you will not be far wrong. Be careful to defend your head from the burning heat of the sun, by padding in your hat or bonnet; you may find this head-gear a little tiresome at first, but you will soon get used to it, and a trifling inconvenience at the outset is surely better than a sunstroke in the end.

As to eating.—The mutton of Egypt is villanous, and the beef worse still; the fowls are tolerable, and so are the fish. You may get in Cairo excellent English hams at the provision warehouses; and pigeons you may shoot in abundance in the neighbourhood of Cairo, but do not shoot the pretty doves that coo so lovingly near your window, and sometimes enter your apartments. Pork, albeit forbidden food to Mohammedans and Copts, is to be procured: many an excellent pork chop have I had from

the shop of a *Jew* pork-butcher, who, I hope, is still flourishing, in the European quarter at Cairo. Bass's bitter beer you may get at a very reasonable price, and also Tennant's Scotch ale. Good Greek wine is also to be had, and, if you have any taste for it, French wine, as sour and meagre as ever you drank in a Parisian café. The arrack is also good, but should be drank very sparingly, as it is heating; indeed, if drunk at all it should be mixed with lemon-juice and water, or, for such is the custom of the country, a wine-glass of arrack should be immediately followed by a tumbler of water.

Take care, when starting to cross the Desert, to take with you plenty of double-baked bread, and also of rice,—Damietta rice is the best—you should also have a large crate full of oranges and lemons, and abundance of coffee, roasted and unroasted, and tea, which you should procure before starting from England. Be not persuaded to carry fowls with you, they will have to suffer a vast amount of torment in travelling, and consequently, if your heart be not as hard as adamant, you will eat them with compunction, and a vivid remembrance of the lingering torments they have endured for the

gratification of your palate. Sausages of the Bologna type demand your especial attention —what they are made of I know not, probably the shades of departed dogs might be able to give a satisfactory reply.

Potatoes should also be taken, but you must keep diligent watch over them or they will rapidly disappear, for dragomans have a great tendency to make away with them. Take also a crate full of oranges and lemons: the latter will take away any bad taste in the water you may have to drink, and nullify any purgative quality the water may possess. A small quantity of charcoal should be taken, but in most parts of the Desert, wood is to be met with, which latter should always be used when obtainable, the charcoal being reserved for emergencies.

Whatever Arabic you know, make use of; it pleases the Arabs, and they will rejoice to add to your vocabulary.

For your own smoking, if you are a smoker, take a leathern bag of djebelēē tobacco, for the Arabs take a cheaper sort, called soorēē, which they will like equally well. When you have once seen how they enjoy their coffee and tobacco, you will not grudge the money which

has helped to contribute to their harmless gratification. Never offer them wine or spirits; if they partake of either, they do violence to their consciences, and you sow among them the seed of much evil, from which they are now happily free.

Tell them the history of the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and teaching of Jesus; to these things they will, in a general way, listen, and the good seed of the kingdom of heaven, broad-cast over the Arabian Desert, may, in due season, bring forth fruit to perfection. No region is too desolate for the Holy Spirit to render it fertile; and I believe there are in Arabia many honest and good hearts, which only want proper cultivation.

I think the following extract from Keightley's Crusaders, for the accuracy of which I can vouch, may be, to future pilgrims, both interesting and serviceable :—

DESCRIPTION OF JERUSALEM.

"THE city of Jerusalem lies upon four hills, extending from north to south. Two of these hills, Zion and Acra, are of a larger, the other two, Moriah and Bezetha, of a smaller size.

Mount Zion forms the south-west part of the town, and from the narrow Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which runs round it on the south and west, it rises in rugged, inaccessible rocks, while on the north-east, it declines so slightly, that Mount Moriah, which here joins it, might be considered only a less elevated portion of it. But a valley, of some depth and breadth, separates it from Acra, which lies north of it. Eastwards of Acra, and northwards of Moriah, lies Bezetha, the lowest and smallest of these hills From thence, the ground sinks gradually more and more to the north, and terminates in a plain. East of Jerusalem, under Bezetha and Moriah, runs the Valley of Jehoshaphat, through which, from north to south, flows the brook Kidron, a torrent in winter, but its channel is dry during the heats of summer and autumn; and the only water then to be found is the brackish and unpleasant produce of the fount of Siloah, at the foot of Mount Moriah. The Valley of Jehoshaphat is two thousand paces long, and, in the middle, four hundred paces wide. East of it lies the village of Gethsemane, south of which, and opposite Mount Moriah, rises the Mount of Olives,—to double the height of

Mount Zion, but easy of ascent, and commanding a view as far as the shores of the Dead Sea. West of Zion, in the Valley of Hinnom, were the pool and conduit celebrated in Scripture. Hills environ the city all sides but the north; the land, though deficient in water, is good for agriculture, but is devoid of wood and pasture.

"The gates of Jerusalem, at the time of the first crusade, were three in number: the gate of St. Stephen, on the north, that of David, on the west, and that of Mount Olivet, on the east. Double walls surrounded all parts of the town which were not sufficiently defended by nature, and on the west point of Mount Zion, lay the strong castle called the Tower of David, built of huge masses of stone, cemented with mortar and melted lead.

"On a level space, five hundred yards long, four hundred yards wide, on the south side of Mount Moriah, stood, and still stands, on the site of Solomon's temple, the stately mosque erected by Omar, and adorned by the Ommigade khalif, Merwân. The quadrangle, which much reminds one of an Oxford 'quad,' was surrounded by walls and covered walks; four arched gates, each sixteen feet in height,

and seven feet in width, led into it from the four cardinal points, and over the gates, and at the corners, rose minarets, from which the voice of the imâms summons the Moslems to prayer. Within this court, is a second quadrangle, of two hundred paces in length, and a hundred and fifty in breadth, elevated six feet above its level. Its sides run parallel with those of the exterior one, and four short flights of steps, opposite the four gates, lead up to its area, flagged with white marble, on which no one dare tread unless with bare and pure feet. In the centre, rose the octangular mosque, two hundred and fifty-six paces in circumference, and sixteen fathoms in height; its roof, which was nearly flat, was covered with lead, and four doors, each supported by six pillars of marble or porphyry, opened to the north, south, east, and west. The walls were covered, within and without, with white marble; variegated marble covered the floor. The roof was supported by four-and-twenty pillars of grey marble, which formed a large circle; a smaller circle of sixteen pillars, about three feet high, sustained the cupola, which, rising at first octangular, like the mosque itself, was finally crowned with a

small round roof. Doors and windows opened from each of its eight sides, giving an easy passage out on the flat roof."

"PRAY

FOR THE

PEACE OF JERUSALEM."

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